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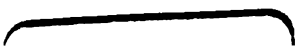

THE WORKS

OF

ALPHONSE DAUDET

LIMITED EDITION

XVIII.

PORT-TARASCON

STUDIES AND LANDSCAPES

Of the LIMITED EDITION of Alphonse one thousand copies have been for America.

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THE WORKS OF

ALPHONSE DAUDET

PORT-TARASCON

TO WHICH IS ADDED

STUDIES AND LANDSCAPES

TRANSLATED BY

KATHARINE PRESCOTT WORMELEY

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY WILLIAM P. TRENT

ILLUSTRATED BY P. G. JEANNIOT

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INTRODUCTION.

FIVE years after the crowning success of *Tartarin sur les Alpes*, Daudet published the third and last volume of his memorable series, under the appropriate title of *Port-Tarascon*. The vogue of his humour throughout the whole civilized world was sufficiently proved by the fact that a distinguished American novelist found it worth his while to make an excellent version of these latest adventures of the superb Tartarin, while a popular American magazine was glad to secure permission to give the translation to its readers in serial form. But the Daudet of 1890 was a very different man from the Daudet who had been able to make Europe hold its sides when with inimitable gravity he exclaimed, "Décidément le Mont-Blanc comptait une victime de plus, et quelle victime!" Since 1885 he had been an intense nervous sufferer. That dreadest of all the foes of the man of letters, insomnia, had taken hold upon him. He would indulge himself in long periods of relaxation and then would work with feverish energy, with results not altogether propitious to his fame. The bitter, if interesting satire of *L'Immortel* be-

longs to this period, and was hardly the best of forerunners for another Tartarin book. It is, of course, true that great humourists have been known to do excellent work under the pressure of disease, and even of family cares and sufferings, and it is further true that *Port-Tarascon* shows many traces of the master hand; but it is not given to every one to be a Tom Hood, and it is quite clear that a sustained masterpiece of humourous fiction is about as difficult a task as any ill man could set himself.

But could Daudet have made *Port-Tarascon* equal to its two predecessors even if he had been in perfect health? We may well doubt it. As we have seen elsewhere, Mark Twain, who, like Daudet, had made *Huckleberry Finn* the equal or the superior of *Tom Sawyer* failed when he undertook a trilogy. Even Shakespeare did not make an altogether conspicuous success of his attempt to depict Falstaff as a lover. The ebbing and flowing tide of artistic success seems to reverse the Canute scene, and to say to the kings of poetry and fiction, "Thus far shall ye go and no farther." Balzac felt the force of this law in his successive portraitures of Vautrin, nor does Cooper seem to escape its workings in his "Leather Stocking" series. Perhaps the indefatigable Trollope, who came as near to being a machine as any author of respectable powers has ever come, approximated unbroken success in his Barsetshire novels more completely than any of

his greater brothers has ever done in a continuous group of works; but with all due respect to Trollope's not fully appreciated ability, most of us would rather make a comparative failure in Daudet's company than succeed in his.

But wherein does *Port-Tarascon* fall below its predecessors? This question might be answered by enumerating many scenes and episodes from the later book, and setting them in contrast with avowedly successful features of the earlier volumes. For example the defence of the monastery of Pampérigouste by Tartarin-Crusader is plainly less spontaneous and amusing than any of the great exploits of Tartarin-Nimrod or Tartarin-Alpinist. Again, where in the first two books will one find as many dragging pages as are consumed by "The veritable legend of Antichrist told upon the deck of the 'Tutu-Panpan' by the Reverend Father Bataillet"? But it is not in its details, some of which are admirable, that we find the cause of Daudet's comparative want of success in his last venture in humourous fiction; it is in its general subject-matter, which is too gloomy to be treated gayly.

Port-Tarascon is at bottom a satire containing Daudet's views with regard to the experiments in colonizing that his beloved France was making. He had no illusions on the subject, and was bent on stripping his readers of any illusions they might have. He succeeded in his purpose so far as to make one wonder often whether it is not a very

good satire one is reading. But the form into which he has thrown this satire is that of a humourous story pure and simple, which should have no greater satiric content than is consonant with a mild holding up to ridicule of certain foibles common to humanity. A vein of specific, mordant satire is entirely foreign to such a work of art. Yet such a vein is continually cropping up in *Port-Tarascon;* indeed, one wonders that the anti-expansionists in the United States have not made the book one of their campaign documents. It follows, therefore, that, form and substance being at variance, the story, as a whole, fails to give thorough artistic pleasure.

This conclusion is strengthened by an examination of the treatment accorded by Daudet to his unique hero. One has no objection to Tartarin's being made the dupe of that crafty schemer, the Duc de Mons. The "man of the North" may triumph over the confiding, visionary "man of the South," but the latter will retain our respect. Yet when the deluded Tartarin deludes in his turn the whole population of Tarascon and leads them forth, men, women, and children, to endure all manner of hardships in an insalubrious island of the Southern seas, one feels that Daudet has been too hard upon Tartarin, upon Tarascon, upon his visionary countrymen, and upon the trustful reader. It is true that many of the adventures of the colonists are related with remarkable verve, and that the old inimitable humour is continually flashing out. It is

true also that all the good Tarasconese, save the brave Bravida, are brought back to their beloved town, and allowed to resume their easy-going life as if nothing had happened. But one feels that Tartarin has been degraded, and at the end one is forced to see him leave Tarascon in poverty and to hear the news of his death as an exile. Is this treating us fairly? What has the glorious Tartarin, after his hair-breadth escapes amid the burning sands of the deserts and the gleaming snows of the Alps, to do with a commonplace foe like Death? He deserved immortality, this ebullient son of the merry South. Death for the Duc de Mons, but not for Tartarin! It was all very well for Trollope to overhear a conversation in a restaurant, and actuated by it go home and kill Mrs. Proudie the next morning; we do not mind being in at the death of that matchless shrew; but Tartarin! — he should have lived forever.

Yet in our affection for Tartarin we have no right to be unjust to Daudet, and we should be unjust if we did not acknowledge that *Port-Tarascon*, with all its faults, is a legitimate child of his rare imagination. Some of the adventures of the colonists are admirably described. The landing of the British and the dignified conduct of Tartarin — who might, however, have been left a bachelor — could not be better done. The character of Pascalon, too, has grown in his creator's hands, and we follow with amused interest his love-affair with the heiress of the Espazettes and his single-

hearted devotion to his illustrious master. As for Tartarin's complacent tracing of the parallel between his own career and that of the great Napoleon it is worthy of a place in the earlier volumes, nor is the incident of his firing upon La Tarasque derogatory to his true fame. And when we are once more comfortably back in Tarascon, what could be better than that delicious trial-scene — with the heated air putting the stranger judges to sleep, but affecting not a whit the excited populace or that prince of long-winded advocates Bompard du Mazet, who "had spoken for five hours" — with Tartarin, imperturbable in his innocence, but suddenly rising and exclaiming, with his hand upstretched, "Before God and man I swear that I did not write that letter," and then, on examining the document, answering very simply, "True enough, this is my very hand-writing; this letter was sent by me; I just did n't recall it," — finally with the dramatic apparition of the long deplored Bompard, who had at last made up his mind to venture across the suspension-bridge and save his old friend Tartarin from ignominy and perhaps death — what, we may well ask, could be more Tarasconesque and therefore more worthy of Daudet's genius than all this? Even the parting of Tartarin from his friends, when he, too, must take his life in his hands and creep across the dread bridge, would be delightful were not the shadow of the dismal end cast upon us.

Yes, *Port-Tarascon* is a book which the lover of

Daudet cannot afford to neglect if he will be content to enjoy it by portions and not consider it too narrowly as a whole. But it is not a book to begin with, for it might easily happen that such a reader, having heard of the wondrous exploits of Tartarin the Superb, might find his expectations so betrayed that he would think it unnecessary to peruse the two indisputable masterpieces that preceded it. For this reason it will be well to close the present introduction with a reiteration of the claim made in connection with the first of the Tartarin volumes, that, after all, those friends of Daudet seem to be in the right who rest his appeal for future fame upon the Tartarin series and *Numa Roumestan*. For whatever else Daudet was, he was a delightful poet and a great humourist combined.

W. P. TRENT.

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PORT-TARASCON.

IT was September, and it was in Provence, at the end of the vintage, some five or six years ago.

From the great break harnessed to two little Camargue horses which were taking us, the poet Mistral, my eldest son, and me, at top speed to the railway station of Tarascon and the express train of the P. L. M., it seemed to us divine, this close of day of a burning pallor, a wan, exhausted, feverish, passionate day, like the beautiful faces of the women yonder.

Not a breath of air, in spite of the rapidity of our drive. The Spanish irises with their ribbon-leaves stood erect and rigid by the roadside; and along these country roads, as white as snow, the white of a dream, where the dust creaked motionless beneath the wheels, came a slow defile of carts laden with purple grapes, none but the purple ones, lads and lasses following behind, silent and grave, all of them tall, strapping, long in the legs, and black-eyed. Dark grapes and dark eyes, nothing else to be seen in the vats, in the baskets, and beneath the turned-down brims of the vin-

tagers' felt hats or the kerchiefs worn by the women on their heads, the ends of which they held in their closed teeth.

Sometimes, at the angle of two fields, a cross stood up against the pallor of the sky, bearing on each of its arms a heavy branch of grapes, hung there by way of an *ex-voto*.

"*Vé!* (See!)" exclaimed Mistral, with a loving gesture and a smile of pride that was almost maternal before these ingenuously pagan manifestations of his Provençal compatriots; after which he resumed his tale, — one of those gilded and perfumed tales of the Rhone region, such as this Provençal Goethe sheds as he flies, from two hands ever open, one of which is Poesy, the other Reality.

O miracle of words! magic symphony of hour, scenery, and proud peasant legend, which the poet evolved before us along the whole of that narrow way between the olive-trees and the vineyards! . . How happy we were; how light and fair was life to me!

Suddenly my eyes were dimmed, an anguish wrung my heart. "Father, how pale you are!" cried my son; and scarcely had I the strength to murmur, as I pointed to the castle of King René, the four towers of which saw me from afar coming across the plain: "There is Tarascon!"

The fact is, we had a terrible account to settle, the Tarasconese and I. I knew they were very angry, nourishing a black rancour against me for my jokes about their town, and its great man, the

illustrious, the delightful Tartarin. Letters and anonymous threats had warned me: "If you ever pass through Tarascon, beware!" Others had brandished o'er my head the vengeance of the hero: "Tremble! the old lion still has beak and claws! . ."

A lion with a beak, — the devil!

More alarming still: I had it from the commandant of the gendarmerie of the region that a Parisian commercial traveller, having, by an unfortunate homonymy or simple hoax, signed "Alphonse Daudet" on the hotel register, was brutally attacked at the door of a café and threatened with a plunge into the Rhone, in conformity with local tradition: —

Dé brin o dé bran
Cabussaran
Dou fenestroun
De Tarascoun
Dedins lou Rose.[1]

That is an old couplet of '93, which is still sung down yonder, emphasized with darksome memories of the drama witnessed by King René's towers at that period.

Now, as I had never cared to plunge head foremost from the casemates of Tarascon, I had always avoided that good town on my journeys through

[1] By will or by force
They 'll jump
From the casemates
Of Tarascon
Into the Rhone.

the South. But on this occasion an evil fate, combined with a desire to embrace my dear Mistral and the impossibility of taking the express train elsewhere than at Tarascon, had cast me hand and foot into the jaws of the lion with a beak.

If I had only had to do with Tartarin! . . man to man . . . duel with poisoned arrows under the trees of the Promenade, — that would not have frightened me. But the anger of the People, and the Rhone — that vast Rhone! . .

Ah! I tell you, all is not roses in the life of a novelist. . .

Singular thing! the nearer we approached the town, the more depopulated were the roads; the vintage carts were rare. Soon nothing lay before us but an empty, dusty highway, and all around us in the fields was the breadth and the solitude of a desert.

" It is odd," said Mistral, in a low voice, a good deal impressed; " one would think it was Sunday."

" If it were Sunday we should hear the bells," added my son in the same tone; for the silence which wrapped the town and its suburbs was subduing. Nothing, not so much as a clock, not a cry, not even those sounds of a wheelwright at work which ring so clear in the vibrant Southern atmosphere.

And yet, there were the first buildings of the suburbs rising before us, — an oil-mill, the custom-house freshly plastered. We arrived.

Our stupor was great when, having scarcely entered that pebbly roadway, we found it deserted,

doors and windows closed, neither cat nor dog, children nor hens, nobody! — the smoky portal of the blacksmith stripped of the two wheels which used to flank it; the great vine curtains of the Tarasconese porches, protectors against flies, departed like the flies themselves; and that exquisite puff of garlic soup exhaled by all the kitchens of the town at this hour, gone too!

Tarascon no longer smelling of garlic — imagine it! . .

Mistral and I, we looked at each other terrified; and truly, we had good reason to be so. Expecting the roars of an infuriated populace, to find only the death-like silence of a Pompeii! . .

In the town, where we could put the name on every house, on every shop, familiar to our eyes since childhood, this impression of emptiness and abandonment became more and more striking. Closed was the pharmacy Bézuquet on the Placette; the shop of the gunsmith Costecalde likewise; also that of the confectioner Rébuffat. Departed were the scutcheons of the notary Cambalalette, and the sign (painted on canvas) of Marie-Joseph-Spiridion Excourbanièss, manufacturer of Arlesian sausages, — for the sausage of Arles is always made at Tarascon; and I here call attention, in passing, to this great mistake of historical justice.

But, anyhow, what had become of the inhabitants of Tarascon?

Our break rolled along the driveway, beneath the warm shade of the plane-trees, their white, smooth trunks rising at intervals, with never a

grasshopper now to sing its song: even the grasshoppers gone! And Tartarin's house—its shutters closed, itself mute and blind like its neighbours; not a blacking-box at the foot of the wall of the famous garden of the baobab, nor so much as one little Savoyard to call to you: "*Cira, moussu?*"

One of us said: "Perhaps they have got the cholera."

For it is a fact that when an epidemic appears in Tarascon the inhabitants remove themselves, and camp in tents at a good safe distance from the town until the infection has passed away.

Hearing the word "cholera," of which all Provençals have a maddening terror, our coachman whipped up his horses; and a few moments later we stopped at the stairway of the station, which is perched at the top of a great viaduct that overlooks the town.

There we again found life, human voices, and faces. Amid the tangle of rails, trains were succeeding one another without cessation; up-trains, down-trains, halting a moment with banging of doors and station cries: —

"Tarascon! five minutes' stop . . . Change for Nîmes, Montpellier, Cette . . ."

Instantly Mistral ran to the superintendent, an old official who had never left that station for thirty-five years.

"Eh! *bé!* Maître Picard . . . the Tarasconese? where are they? what have you done with them?"

The other, quite amazed at our bewilderment, —

"What! . . you don't know? . . Where do you

come from? . . Don't you read the papers? . . They have made talk enough about it, their island of Port-Tarascon. . . Well, yes, my good friend, they 're gone. . . Gone, those Tarasconese. . . Gone to colonize . . . the illustrious Tartarin at their head. . . And they 've carried everything with them, even to La Tarasque ! "

He interrupted himself to give orders, and bustled away to the farther end of the track; while at our feet, in the setting sun, we gazed at the steeples and belfries of the abandoned town, at its old ramparts gilded in the sun-rays to a beautiful crusty yellow, giving a most exact idea of a wood-cock pie, of which nothing remained, alas ! but the crust.

" Tell me, Monsieur Picard," asked Mistral of the superintendent, who now came back to us with his kind smile, " how long is it since this singular emigration took place? "

" Six months."

" What news has come from them? "

" None."

Pécaïre ! . . But some time later we received news, precise and detailed news, sufficient to enable me to relate to you the exodus of the valiant little people who followed their hero, and the serious misadventures that befell them.

Pascal says: " We need the agreeable, and the true; but the agreeable itself must be founded on the true." I have endeavoured to conform to Pascal's doctrine in the following history of Port-Tarascon.

My narrative is based on fact; it is taken from the letters of the emigrants; from the "Memorial" of the youthful secretary of Tartarin himself; from reports published in the "Gazette des Tribunaux;" and should you find, here or there, some rather too extravagant tarasconade, may I be shot if I invented it.[1]

THE AUTHOR.

[1] Read in the newspapers of a dozen years ago the trial of "New France" and the colony of Port-Breton; also the curious volume published by Dreyfous, and written by Dr. Baudoin, physician to the expedition.

FIRST BOOK.

I.

Lamentations of Tarascon over the present state of things. The Bulls. The White-Fathers. A Tarasconese in Paradise. Siege and surrender of the abbey of Pampérigouste.

"BRANQUEBALME, my dear fellow, . . . I am not content with France! . . Our rulers are doing just all they please with us."

Thus said Tartarin one evening, standing before the fireplace of the club-room, and proffering, with the gesture and accent we can all imagine, these memorable words, which summed up admirably what was thought and said at Tarascon-sur-Rhône for two or three months before the emigration. In general, the Tarasconese do not concern themselves with politics; indolent by nature, indifferent to all that does not touch them locally, they hold to the maintenance of "the present state of things," as they say. Nevertheless, for some time past, the "state of things" had come in for a good deal of blame.

"Our rulers are doing just all they please with us," said Tartarin.

"Just all" meant, in the first place, the injunction against bull-races.

You know, of course, the history of that Tarasconese, very bad Christian and rascal of the worst kind, who, after his death, having got into Paradise by a fluke while Saint Peter's back was turned, positively refused to go out, in spite of the entreaties of the divine turnkey. Then what did the great Saint Peter do? He sent a whole covey of angels to shout before the gates of heaven as long as they had voice to keep it up: "*Tél tél* . . the bulls! . . *tél tél* . . the bulls! . . ." which is the well-known cry at the Tarasconese races. Hearing that, the rascal changed countenance. "What! you have races here, great Saint Peter?"

"Races! . . I should think so! and fine ones, too, my good fellow."

"Whereabouts? where do you have them, the races?"

"In front of Paradise. . . Plenty of room there, you may be sure of that."

Instantly the Tarasconese rushed out to look for himself, and the gates of heaven were closed upon him everlastingly.

If I here recall this legend, as ancient as the stone seats of the Tour de Ville, it is in order to show the passion of the Tarasconese for their bull-races, and the rage into which they were thrown by the suppression of that style of exercise.

After that came an order for the expulsion of the White-Fathers, and the closing of their pretty little monastery of Pampérigouste, perched on a hillside all gray with thyme and lavender; installed there for centuries at the gates of the town, from

which could be seen among the pines the dentel of its belfries, carolling in the clear fresh breeze of morning with the larks, or in the twilight with the melancholy cry of the curlew.

The Tarasconese were very fond of them, their White-Fathers, gentle, kind, inoffensive beings, who knew how to turn the fragrant herbs of their mountainette into an excellent elixir; they also loved them for their nice swallow-pies, and their delicious *pains-poires*, which are quinces enveloped in a fine golden crust; hence the name of Pampérigouste bestowed upon the abbey.[1]

Therefore, when the official order to leave their convent reached the Fathers, and the latter refused to obey it, fifteen hundred to two thousand Tarasconese, porters, shoe-blacks, stevedores for the Rhone vessels, — all, in short, that we call riff-raff, — marched to Pampérigouste and shut themselves up there with the worthy monks.

The Tarasconese bourgeoisie, the club gentlemen, Tartarin at their head, were also prepared to support so holy a cause. There was not a moment's hesitation. But no sensible person flings himself into such an enterprise without preparation of some kind, — good as it may be for the riff-raff to behave so heedlessly.

First and foremost, costumes were necessary. These were ordered; superb costumes, reminiscent of the crusades, with a large white cross on the breast; and all about, before and behind, crossed-

[1] *Pains-poires-panpéri; panpéri-gousto.*

bones, braided. This braiding took a long time to do.

By the time all were ready, the monastery was already invested. Troops surrounded it in a triple circle, encamped in the fields and on the stony slopes of the little hill. Their red trousers, seen from afar amid the thyme and the lavender, had quite the effect of an outbloom of poppies.

Patrols of cavalry were continually met in the roads, their long carbines on their hips, the scabbards of their sabres striking the flanks of their horses, the cases of their revolvers at their belts.

But this display of force was not likely to stop the intrepid Tartarin, resolved to pass to the monastery, together with a large body of club gentlemen.

Indian file, creeping on their hands and knees with all the precautions, all the classic wiles of Fenimore savages, they succeeded in slipping past the lines of investment, skirting the rows of sleeping tents, cautiously avoiding sentries and patrols, and warning one another of dangerous spots by imperfect imitations of the cries of birds.

It needed courage to attempt this enterprise on nights as clear as the open day. It is true, however, that the interest of the besiegers was to let as many get into the place as possible.

What they wanted was to starve the abbey out, rather than carry it by force. Therefore, the soldiers always turned away their heads when they saw the roving shadows in the moonlight or the starlight. More than one officer who had taken

his absinthe at the club with the lion-slayer, recognized him from afar, in spite of his disguise, and hailed him familiarly: "Good-night, Monsieur Tartarin."

Once inside the abbey, Tartarin organized the defence.

That devil of a man had read every known book on sieges and blockades. He brigaded the Tarasconese as a militia under the orders of the brave Commander Bravida, and, filled with recollections of Sevastopol and Plevna, he made them dig up earth, a great deal of earth, and surround the abbey with taluses, moats, fortifications of all kinds, in which the club, little by little, became so cramped as scarcely to be able to breathe; consequently the besieged were, as one might say, immured behind their defences; which was very satisfactory to the besiegers.

The convent metamorphosed into a fortress was subjected to military discipline; this was as it should be, a state of siege being declared. All was done to beat of drum, the bugles sounding. In the early morning, at reveillee, the drums growled through the courtyards, corridors, and beneath the arcades of the cloister. From morning till night they sounded the bugles; for prayers, *tara-ta;* for the treasurer, *tara-ta-ta;* for the *Père hôtelier, tara-ta-ta-ta;* they bugled for the Angelus, for Matins, and for Complines. They put to shame the besieging army, who carried on their share of the business in the open fields with much less noise; whereas above, up there, on the summit

of the little hill, behind the slender battlements of the abbey-fortress, buglings and drummings, mingling with the tintinnabulations of the bells, made a glorious racket, and cast to the four winds of heaven, in pledge of victory, a joyful chant, half warlike, half sacerdotal.

The deuce of it was that the besiegers, tranquil behind their lines, could revictual when they pleased, and feasted daily. Provence is a land of delight, producing all sorts of good things: clear golden wines, saveloys and Arlesian sausages, delicious melons, more delicious water-melons, nougats of Montélimar; but all these toothsome things went to the government troops; not a drop, not a crumb could enter the blockaded abbey.

Therefore, on one side, the soldiers, who had never known feasts like these, fattened till they burst their tunics; and their horses' haunches grew round and sleek: while on the other side, *Pécaïre!* those poor Tarasconese, the riff-raff especially, early to rise and late to bed, jaded, incessantly on the *qui-vive*, digging and wheeling earth by day and by night under the scorching of sun and torches, were getting so thin and so shrivelled 't was pitiful to see.

Moreover, the provisions of the good Fathers were getting low; swallow-pies and even *pains-poires* were coming to an end.

Could they hold out much longer?

That question was discussed daily on the ramparts and behind the earthworks, now fissured by the drought.

" Those cowards, who don't attack us ! " said the men of Tarascon, shaking their fists at the red trousers sprawling on the grass in the shade of the pines. The idea of attacking themselves never entered their heads, so strong in that fine little people is the sentiment of self-preservation.

Once only did Excourbaniès, a violent fellow, speak of trying a sortie *en masse*, the monks in front, in order to " knock over those mercenaries."

Tartarin shrugged his broad shoulders and merely said: " Child ! "

Then, taking the arm of that fiery " child," he drew him to the top of the counterscarp, and showing him, with a lofty gesture, the cordon of troops ranged upon the hillside, and the sentries posted at every path, he said: —

" Yes or no, are we the besieged? If we are, is it we who should assault? "

A murmur of approbation rose around him.

" Evidently . . . He is right. . . It is for them to begin, inasmuch as they besiege. . ."

And once more it was seen that no one knew the laws of war like Tartarin.

Nevertheless, something had to be done.

One day, the Council being assembled in the great hall of the Chapter, lighted by tall windows encased in sculptured woodwork, the *Père hôtelier* (commissary) read his report on the resources of the place. The White-Fathers listened, silent, sitting bolt upright on their *miséricordes* (half-seats hypocritically shaped, which allowed of being seated while appearing to stand).

It was lamentable, that report of the *Père hôtelier!* What they had devoured, those Tarasconese, since the beginning of the siege! Swallow-pies, so many hundred; *pains-poires*, so many thousand; and so much of this, and so much of that! Of all the things enumerated, with which in the beginning the monastery had been well provided, there remained so little, so very little, that one might as well say there was nothing.

The Reverends looked at one another with long faces, and agreed that with such a larder, given an enemy that did n't desire to push them to extremes, they might have held out for years without lacking anything, if no one had come to their support. The *Père hôtelier* was continuing to read in a monotonously heart-broken voice, when a clamour interrupted him.

The door of the hall flew open with a noise, and Tartarin appeared, an agitated Tartarin, tragic, his cheeks scarlet, his beard bristling above the white cross upon his breast. With his sword he saluted the Prior erect on his *miséricorde*, then each Father, one after the other, and said solemnly: —

" Monsieur le Prieur, I can no longer restrain my men... They are dying of hunger... All the cisterns are empty. The moment has come to surrender the fortress, or to bury ourselves beneath its ruins."

What he did not say, although it had its importance, was that for two weeks he had been deprived of his matutinal chocolate, which he saw in his dreams, rich, smoking, oily, accompanied by a

glass of cool spring water clear as crystal, instead of the brackish water of the cisterns to which he was now reduced.

Instantly the Council was afoot, and the roar of voices all talking together expressed but one thought, one unanimous opinion: "Surrender... The place must be surrendered..." Père Bataillet alone, an extreme sort of man, proposed to blow up the monastery with what powder they had, and to fire it himself.

But the others refused to listen to him, and night having come, monks and militia (leaving the keys in the doors), followed by Excourbaniès, Bravida, and Tartarin with his body of club gentlemen, in short, all the defenders of Pampérigouste, issued forth, no drums or bugles this time, and silently descended the hill, a phantomatic procession, beneath the light of the moon and the benevolent gaze of the enemy's sentinels.

This memorable defence of the Abbey of Pampérigouste did great honour to Tartarin; but the occupation of the convent of their White-Fathers by the government troops rankled in the breasts of the Tarasconese with a gloomy rancour.

II.

The pharmacy on the little square. Apparition of a man of the North. "God wills it, M. le duc!" A paradise beyond the seas.

SOME time after the closure of the convent, the apothecary Bézuquet was enjoying the cool of the evening before his door in company with his pupil Pascalon and the Reverend Father Bataillet.

I ought to say that the dispersed monks had been taken by the various Tarasconese householders into their homes. Each had wanted his White-Father; well-to-do people, shopkeepers, the bourgeoisie, took each of them one; the families of the artisans clubbed together and shared the entertainment of a single holy man.

In every shop could be seen a white cowl, — in that of the gunsmith Costecalde, amid rifles and carbines and hunting-knives; at the counter of mercer Beaumevieille, behind spools of silk; everywhere, in short, rose the same apparition of a big white bird, the familiar pelican. And this presence of the Fathers in every domestic dwelling was a real benediction. Well-mannered, gentle, jovial, and discreet, they were never in the way, took but little space round the family hearth, while

at the same time they brought with them a spirit of kindness, and also an unusual reserve.

It was as if the good God himself were in the home; the men ceased to swear and to use coarse language; the women lied no longer, or, at any rate, seldom; the children were good, and sat still in their chairs. Morning and evening, at the hour for prayer, and at meals, when they said the Benedicité and Grace, those big white sleeves spread themselves out like protecting wings above the assembled family. With such a benediction perpetually over them, how could the Tarasconese do otherwise than live in sanctity and virtue?

Every one was proud of his own Reverend, boasted of him, proclaimed his merits, — more especially the apothecary Bézuquet, to whom the good luck had fallen of receiving into his home Père Bataillet.

All fire, all nerves, was this R. P. Bataillet, possessing the gift of true popular eloquence, and renowned for his fashion of relating miracles and legendary tales. He was really a superb-looking fellow, well-formed, swarthy skin, fiery eyes, and the head of a stag. Under the long folds of his thick serge he had a noble presence, though one shoulder was higher than the other, and he walked sideways.

But these slight defects were not observed when he came down from the pulpit after preaching, and made his way through the crowd, his big nose snuffing the wind, hurrying to reach the sacristy, and quivering still with the force of his own elo-

Bézuquet having risen, bowed, rather intimidated at finding himself unawares, without warning, in presence of so great a personage. "Monsieur le Duc . . ." he stammered, "Monsieur le Duc. . ." But Tartarin interrupted him.

"Let us go in, gentlemen; we have grave matters to discuss."

He entered first, back well-rounded, air mysterious, into the little salon of the pharmacy, the window of which, looking on the square, served as a show-case for bottles of alcohol containing fœtuses and tapeworms in a tangle, interspersed with cigarettes of camphor.

The door closed behind them as though upon conspirators. Pascalon remained alone in the shop, with orders from Bézuquet to attend to the clients and not allow any one, on any pretext, to enter the salon.

The pupil, much puzzled, began to set in order on the shelves the boxes of cough lozenges, the flasks of *sirupus gummi*, and the other officinal products. But from time to time the sound of voices reached his ears, and especially could he distinguish the deep bass of Tartarin uttering singular words: "Polynesia . . . terrestrial paradise . . . sugar-cane . . . distilleries . . . free colony . . ." Then a burst from Père Bataillet: "Bravo! I 'm of it." As for the man of the North, he spoke so low that Pascalon could hear nothing. In vain did he wedge his ear into the keyhole . . . All of a sudden the door flew open violently, impelled *manu militari* by the energetic fist of the Father. The pupil rolled

to the other end of the pharmacy. But, in the general agitation, no one paid attention to him.

Tartarin, standing in the doorway, his finger raised toward the bunches of poppyheads that were hanging to dry from the ceiling of the shop, cried aloud, with the action of an archangel brandishing his sword: —

"God wills it, Monsieur le Duc! Our work will be a grand one!"

Then followed a confusion of outstretched hands, seeking one another, clasping, pressing; energetic grasps as if to seal forever and ever irrevocable pledges. Hot from this last effusion, Tartarin, lofty, magnified, left the pharmacy with the Duc de Mons to continue their tour of exhortation through the town.

Two days later, the "Forum" and the "Galoubet," the two organs of Tarascon, were filled with articles and authorized information about a colossal affair. The head-lines bore in heavy type the words: FREE COLONY OF PORT-TARASCON. The advertisements were stupefying: "For sale; lands at five francs the acre, giving a return of several thousand francs a year. . . Fortune rapid and assured. . . Colonists desired."

Then followed the history and description of an island where the protected colony would settle; an island bought from King Negonko by the Duc de Mons in the course of his travels; surrounded, moreover, by other territories, which could, later, be acquired to enlarge the colony.

Climate paradisaical, temperature oceanic, but very equable in spite of its proximity to the equator, never varying more than two or three degrees; country very fertile, wonderfully wooded, miraculously watered, rising rapidly from the sea-shore; which enabled every one to choose the precise temperature suited to his constitution. Provisions were abundant, fruits delicious, hanging to all the trees, game of every kind in the woods and plains, fish innumerable in the waters. From the point of view of commerce and navigation, a splendid roadstead able to contain a fleet, a port of great safety inclosed by headlands, also an inner port with docks, quays, wharves, light-house, semaphore, derricks; nothing would be lacking.

These works were already begun by Chinese and Kanaka labourers, under the direction and after the plans of the ablest engineers and the most distinguished architects. The colonists would find on arrival most comfortable accommodations, and even, by ingenious combinations and the payment of fifty francs extra, houses could be remodelled to suit the needs of every one.

You can fancy how the Tarasconese imagination set to work after reading of such marvels. Plans were made in every family. One had a vision of green blinds, another was dreaming of a pretty portico; this one wanted brick, that one freestone. They drew, they coloured, they added detail upon detail; a pigeon-house would be charming, a weathervane most useful.

"Oh, papa, a veranda!"

"Yes, yes, a veranda, my children."
As for what it was all to cost! . . . . .

While the worthy inhabitants of Tarascon were thus indulging their fancies of ideal settlement, the articles in the "Forum" and the "Galoubet" were being reproduced in all the Southern newspapers, and the towns, villages, and country regions were inundated with prospectuses, headed with vignettes of palm-trees, cocoanut-trees, banana-trees, in short, the whole exotic flora. A rampant propaganda now spread itself over the whole of Provence.

Along the dusty suburban roads of Tarascon Tartarin's cabriolet, driven by himself, went at top speed, Père Bataillet and he sitting well forward and making a rampart of their bodies for the Duc de Mons, swathed in a green veil and devoured by mosquitoes, which assailed him savagely on all sides in humming clouds, eager for the blood of the man of the North, and bent on bloating him up with their stings.

You see, he was from the North, that man! Not a gesture, few words, and such coolness! . . he was never off his centre; he saw things as they are, sedately. You may be easy about that.

And on the little squares, shaded by plane-trees, in the old villages, in wine-shops swarming with flies, in the dance-halls, everywhere, conferences, allocutions, exhortations went on.

The Duc de Mons, in clear and concise language, with the simplicity of naked truth, explained the delights of Port-Tarascon and the profits of the en-

terprise. The ardent voice of the monk preached a crusade of emigration after the fashion of Peter the Hermit. And Tartarin, dusty from the roads as if from a battle, cast forth in his sonorous voice a few resounding phrases: "Victory, conquest, a new country," which his powerful gesture seemed to scatter afar above all heads.

On other occasions adverse meetings were held, where questions and answers were the order of the day.

"Are there venomous reptiles?"

"Not one. Not a snake. Not even a mosquito. And as for wild beasts, why, absolutely none."

"But they say that down there, in the Oceanides, there are cannibals?"

"Never in the world! They are all vegetarians."

"Is it true that savages go naked?"

"As for that, it may be a little true, but not always. Besides, we will clothe them."

Articles, conferences, exhortations, all had a wild success. The stock went up to the hundreds, emigrants flocked in, not only from Tarascon, but all over the South. Some even came from Beaucaire. But halt there! Tarascon thought them very bold to do so, those Beaucaire people!

For centuries, between the two neighbouring towns parted only by the Rhone, a silent hatred growls, which threatens to have no end. If you ask for the cause they will answer you on either side with words that explain nothing.

"We know them, those Tarasconese . . ." say the Beaucaire people, in mysterious tones.

Those of Tarascon reply, with a wink of their shrewd eyes, "We know what they are worth, those Beaucaire gentlemen."

In point of fact, communication between the two towns is nil, and the bridge that was thrown between them serves for absolutely nothing. No one ever goes over it. From hostility in the first place; and secondly, because the violence of the mistral and the width of the river at that point are thought to make the crossing very dangerous.

But if the colonists from Beaucaire were not accepted, the money of everybody was heartily welcomed. The acres at five francs (returning several thousands a year) were sold in batches. From all quarters came gifts in kind, sent by fervent supporters of the work for the good of the colony. The "Forum" published lists of these gifts, among which were several quite remarkable things, to wit: —

Anonymous. One box of small white beads.
" One lot of past numbers of the "Forum."
M. Bécoulet. Forty-five chenille hair-nets with beads, for the Indian women.
Mme. Dourladoure. Six handkerchiefs and six knives for the parsonage.
Anonymous. An embroidered banner for the choral society.
Anduze, de Maguelonne. A stuffed flamingo.
The Margue Family. Six dozen dog-collars.
Anonymous. A braided waistcoat.
A pious lady of Marseilles. A chasuble; gold fringe for the censer-stand; a veil for the pyx.
The same. A collection of coleoptera under glass.

And, regularly, on every list appeared a contribution from Mlle. Tournatoire of "a complete suit to clothe a savage." That was her constant thought, the good old spinster.

All these queer, fantastic gifts, in which Southern absurdity expended its imagination, were sent in cases to the docks and warerooms of the Free Colony established at Marseilles. The Duc de Mons had fixed upon that city as his centre of operations. From his office, luxuriously appointed, he drove the business in style, started companies for distilling cane-sugar, for the trepang fisheries, otherwise called sea-cucumber, a species of mollusk of which the Chinese are extremely fond and for which they will pay a high price, — so said the prospectus. Every day the indefatigable duke saw a new idea develop, or the dawn of some grand machination, which was launched before night.

Between whiles he organized a committee of the Marseilles shareholders under the chairmanship of a Greek banker named Kagaraspaki, and placed the funds of the enterprise in the Ottoman bank of Pamenyar-ben-Kaga, a house of the utmost security.

Tartarin now spent his life, a fevered life, in travelling from Tarascon to Marseilles, and from Marseilles to Tarascon. He kept the enthusiasm of his fellow-citizens boiling, continued the local propaganda, and then, in a second was off in the express train to Marseilles to attend some council or a meeting of the stockholders. His admiration

for the duke increased daily. He was constantly holding up to all the example of the duke's sang-froid, the duke's sound reasoning.

"No danger that he will exaggerate, that man! With *him*, none of those mirage effects that Daudet lays to our charge."

On the other hand, the duke showed himself little (always protected by his mosquito netting), and talked less. The man of the North effaced himself before the man of the South, constantly putting him forward, and leaving to his quenchless loquacity all explanations, promises, and pledges. He contented himself with saying: —

"M. Tartarin alone is in possession of my views."

You can judge if Tartarin was proud!

III.

The Gazette of Port-Tarascon. Good news of the colony. In Polygamilia. Tarascon prepares to weigh anchor. "Do not go! for heaven's sake, do not go!"

ONE morning Tarascon awoke to find the following despatch posted at the corners of all the streets:

"The 'Farandole,' fast-sailing ship of twelve hundred tons burden, has just left Marseilles at break of day; bearing in her broad sides the destinies of a people; also clothing of all kinds for savages, and a cargo of implements of husbandry. Eight hundred emigrants are on board, all from Tarascon, among them Bompard, provisional governor of the colony, Bézuquet, medical practitioner and apothecary, the Reverend Father Vézole, the notary Cambalalette, registrar. I conducted them myself to the offing. All goes well. The duke beaming. Have this printed.

"TARTARIN OF TARASCON."

This telegram, posted throughout the town by Pascalon, to whom it was addressed, filled all souls with gladness. The streets wore the look of a festival, everybody was out, groups were collected before all the posters of that blessed despatch, the words of which were echoed from lip to lip: "Eight hundred emigrants aboard . . . The

duke beaming . . . " and not a man in Tarascon who did not beam like the duke.

This was the second batch of emigrants (sailing one month after the first, on the steamer " Lucifer ") which Tartarin, now invested with the noble title and the important functions of Governor of Port-Tarascon, had despatched from Marseilles to the land of promise. Each time the same despatch, same enthusiasm, same beaming duke. The " Lucifer," unfortunately, had not yet passed the entrance to the Isthmus of Suez. Detained there by an accident, a broken shaft, the old steamer, bought at a bargain, was waiting for help from the " Farandole " to continue her voyage.

This accident, which might have seemed a bad omen, in no wise chilled the enthusiasm of the colonists of Tarascon. It is true that the riff-raff alone were on board of the first ship,—*you* know, the common people, those they always send on in advance.

On the " Farandole " there were also some riff-raff, and certain hot-headed fellows, such as Cambalalette, registrar of the colony. The apothecary Bézuquet, a peaceful man in spite of his formidable moustache, loving his ease, fearing heat and cold, little inclined for remote and perilous adventures, had long resisted all exhortations before he consented to embark. In fact, nothing but a diploma as physician brought him to the point, — that diploma so longed-for all his life, which the Governor of Port-Tarascon now awarded him on his private authority.

He, the Governor, awarded many others — diplomas, brevets, commissions; appointing directors, sub-directors, secretaries, commissaries, grandees of the first class, and grandees of the second class, all of which enabled him to gratify the taste of his compatriots for every kind of title, honour, distinction, costume, and frogged coats.

The embarkation of Père Vézole had nothing of that sort about it. Such a worthy, good-natured creature! always ready for anything, pleased with everything; saying "God be thanked!" for all that happened to him. "God be thanked!" when he had to leave the convent; "God be thanked!" when he found himself hoisted aboard the fast sailer pell-mell with the riff-raff, the destinies of a whole people, and the bundles of clothing for the savages.

The "Farandole" fairly off, no one remained in Tarascon but the nobles and the bourgeoisie; as for these, there was no hurry; they were willing to give the advanced guard time to send back the news of its arrival "over there," in order to let them know what to expect.

Tartarin himself, in his capacity as Governor, organizer, repository of the thought of the Duc de Mons, could not of course leave France until the last convoy. But, while awaiting that day so impatiently desired, he displayed all the energy, the fire of soul and body, which we have hitherto admired in his many enterprises. Ceaselessly on the road between Tarascon and Marseilles, as little to be caught and held as a meteor driven by in-

vincible force, he never appeared, here or there, except to immediately disappear.

"You fatigue yourself too much, Ma-a-aster. . ." stuttered Pascalon on the evenings when the great man came to the pharmacy, back rounded, forehead smoking.

But Tartarin drew himself up. "I shall rest *there*," he said. "Get to work, Pascalon, get to work!"

The pupil, left in charge of the pharmacy on Bézuquet's departure, had accumulated with that responsibility many other important functions. To continue the propaganda so well begun, Tartarin published a newspaper, the "Gazette of Port-Tarascon," which Pascalon wrote and edited all alone, from the first line to the last, under the indications and direction of the Governor.

This combination was certainly rather injurious to the interests of the pharmacy; articles to write, proofs to correct left but little time for officinal labours; but Port-Tarascon before all else!

The "Gazette" gave daily information to the public of the metropolis about the colony. It contained articles on its resources, its beauties, its magnificent future; besides which, there were local items, divers facts, tales for all tastes; narratives of voyages of discovery to islands, conquests and combats with savages for the adventurous. For country gentlemen there were stories of hunting in the forests, amazing fishing parties on rivers extraordinarily fishy, with descriptions of methods and fishing implements in use among the natives.

The quietest inhabitants, shopkeepers, excellent, sedentary bourgeois, delighted in reading of charming breakfasts in the open air beside a brook with cascades, beneath the shade of tall exotic trees; they thought they were really there; they tasted the luscious juice of mangoes, pines, bananas, trickling between their teeth.

"And no flies," said the "Gazette," — flies being as we know, the mar-joy of all the pleasant pleasure-parties in the region about Tarascon.

The "Gazette" published even a novel, called "The Lovely Tarasconese Lady," the daughter of a colonist abducted by the son of a Papuan king; and the vicissitudes of that drama of love opened to the imagination of young persons vistas without end. The financial column gave quotations of colonial products, announced the issue of land shares or sugar or distillery stock, and also the names of subscribers, and of donors of gifts in kind, which still continued to pour in, accompanied with that unfailing "suit for savages" from Mlle. Tournatoire.

To meet the requirements of her frequent gifts, the good spinster must certainly have set up a workshop in her own house. But she was not the only one whom the coming departure for distant and unknown isles had cast into strange and unwonted solicitude.

There came a day when Tartarin was resting tranquilly at home in his little house, his Turkish slippers on his feet, and comfortably wrapped in his dressing-gown, — not unoccupied, however, for near him, scattered on the table, lay books and

papers: narratives of the travels of Bougainville and Dumont-Durville, works on colonization, and manuals of all kinds of agriculture. Amid his poisoned arrows, with the shadow of the baobab flickering feebly on the window shade, he was studying "his colony" and cramming his memory with information which he culled from the books. Between whiles he signed some brevet, appointed a grandee of the first class, or created, on paper with an official heading, a new employment, a new office, to satisfy, as far as possible, the ambitious mania of his fellow-citizens.

While working thus, opening his great eyes and puffing out his cheeks, they came to tell him that a lady, veiled in black, who would not give her name, desired to speak to him. She was even unwilling to enter the house, but awaited him in the garden, whither he hastily repaired, in dressing-gown and slippers.

Day was over; the twilight was already making objects indistinct; but, in spite of the coming darkness and a thick veil, the fire of two burning eyes gleaming beneath the tulle sufficed to make Tartarin recognize his visitor.

"Madame Excourbaniès!"

"Monsieur Tartarin, you see before you a most unhappy woman."

Her voice trembled, heavy with tears. The good man was deeply moved, and said in paternal tones: —

"My poor Evelina, what is the matter? . . Tell me. . ."

Tartarin called by their first names nearly all the ladies in town, whom he had known as children and had married as a municipal officer, being at the same time a confidant, a friend, almost an uncle.

He now took Evelina's arm and walked her round and round the gold-fish basin, while she told him her griefs and her conjugal anxieties: Ever since it became a question of going off to colonize, Excourbaniès had taken pleasure in saying to her, apropos of everything, in a teasing way: —

"You 'll see, you 'll see, when we get down there in Polygamilia . . ."

She, very jealous, but also very artless, in fact rather dense, had taken this jesting seriously.

"Is it true, *that*, Monsieur Tartarin? They do say that in that horrid land men can marry over and over again."

He reassured her kindly.

"No, my dear Evelina, you are mistaken. All the savages of our islands are monogamous. The propriety of their morals is perfect, and under the guidance of our White-Fathers there is nothing to be feared on that account."

"And yet, the very name of the place . . . Polygamilia? . . "

Then at last he understood the joke of that hoaxing rascal Excourbaniès, and he burst out laughing joyously.

"Your husband was making fun of you, my child. The name of the country is not Poly-

gamilia; but Polynesia, which means a group of islands; there is nothing in that to alarm you. . . "

Long and loud did Tarasconese society laugh over this tale.

Meanwhile weeks went by and no letters were received from the emigrants; nothing was heard of them except through despatches forwarded from Marseilles by the duke, — laconic despatches sent in haste from Aden, Sydney, the different ports made by the "Farandole."

After all, this was not so astonishing, taking into account the indolence of the race. Why should they have written? Telegrams were all-sufficient. Those that were received, and regularly published in the "Gazette," brought nothing but good news: *Delightful trip, sea like oil, all well.*

What more was needed to keep up the enthusiasm? —

At last, one day, at the top of the "Gazette" appeared the following despatch, sent, as usual, via Marseilles: —

Arrived Port-Tarascon. Triumphal entry. Friendly natives gave welcome on the jetty. Flag of Tarascon floats on town-hall. Te Deum sung in the cathedral. All is ready. Come soon.

Following this despatch was a dithyrambic article dictated by Tartarin, on the occupation of a new country, the founding of a young city, God's protection visible, the banner of civilization planted on virgin soil, a future *open to all.*

This time, hesitations vanished. A new issue of bonds at a hundred francs an acre was raised like a pan of rolls. The middle-class, the clergy, the nobility, all Tarascon wanted to be off; 't was a fever, a mania for emigration spreading through the town, and sour-chops like Costecalde, the lukewarm, the doubtful, were now the most madly determined on distant colonization.

Preparations were hurried on all sides, from morning till night. Cases were nailed up even in the streets, which were littered with straw and hay; nothing was heard but the pounding of hammers. Men were working in their shirt-sleeves; all were good-humoured, singing, whistling, and borrowing tools from door to door with a lively interchange of talk. The women were packing up their finery, the White-Fathers their chalices, and all the little children their playthings.

The vessel chartered to carry the whole upper class of Tarascon, and baptized "Tutu-panpan" (the local name of the Tarasconese tambourine), was a large iron steamer, commanded by Captain Scrapouchinat, an "old salt" of Toulon. As she did not draw much water, they were able to bring her up the Rhone to Tarascon, where she was moored to the quay, the lading and trimming of the cargo taking more than a month.

While the sailors were stowing those innumerable cases in the hold, the future passengers arranged their cabins; with what gusto! what urbanity! each man striving to be serviceable and agreeable to the others.

"Does this place suit you best? Then, by all means . . ." etc.

"This cabin is the pleasantest; make yourself at home in it!"

And so on about everything.

The Tarasconese nobility, usually so haughty, the d'Aigueboulides, the d'Escudelles, personages who looked at you, as a general thing, from the tops of their great noses, now fraternized with the bourgeoisie.

In the midst of the hurly-burly of embarkation a letter was received one morning from Père Vézole, the first ever dated from Port-Tarascon.

"God be thanked! we have arrived," wrote the good Father. "We lack a great many little things, but God be thanked, all the same! . ."

No enthusiasm in the letter certainly, and no details either. The Reverend confined himself to remarks about King Negonko and his daughter Likiriki, a charming child, to whom he had given a string of beads. He requested that in future articles might be sent that were rather more useful than the usual gifts of donors. That was all. About the port, the town, the installation of the colonists, not a word. Père Bataillet scolded furiously.

"He's dough, your Père Vézole. I'll shake him up for you when I get there!"

The letter was certainly very cold, coming from so kindly a man; but the bad effect it might otherwise have produced was lost in the bustle of getting settled on board and in the deafening noise of the departure of a whole town.

The Governor — Tartarin was no longer called by any other name — passed his days upon the deck of the "Tutu-panpan." His hands behind his back, smiling, he walked up and down in the midst of an encumbering mass of strange things (bread-bags, credence-tables, warming-pans, which had not yet found their place in the stowage of the hold), giving his advice in patriarchal tones:

"You are taking too much, my children. You will find all you want over there."

As for him, his arrows, his baobab, his gold-fish, he left them all, contenting himself with one American carbine of thirty-two calibre and a cargo of flannel. But how he superintended everything! how his eye was everywhere! — not only aboard, but on land; as attentive to the rehearsals of the choral society as he was to the drill of the militia on the Promenade.

The military organization of the Tarasconese, surviving the siege of the Abbey of Pampérigouste, had lately been reinforced in view of the defence of the colony, and of the conquests by which the colonists expected to enlarge their territory; and the Governor, delighted with the martial appearance of his army, frequently expressed to it, and also to its leader, Bravida, in the orders of the day, his extreme satisfaction.

Nevertheless, there were moments when a line of anxious care furrowed the forehead of the Governor.

Two days before the final embarkation, Barafort, a Rhone fisherman, found among the osiers of the

shore an empty bottle, hermetically sealed, the glass of which was still sufficiently transparent to allow of distinguishing something inside that looked like a roll of paper. There is no fisherman in the world who does not know that a find of this kind should be placed in the hands of the authorities. Barafort at once carried to Governor Tartarin the mysterious bottle, which was found to contain the following extraordinary letter: —

"TARTARIN.
TARASCON,
EUROPE.

"Awful cataclysm at Port-Tarascon. Island, town, port, all engulfed. Bompard admirable as ever; and, as ever, dead, the victim of his own devotion. Do not go! in heaven's name, do not go! let no one start!"

This find seemed to be the work of some jester. How could this bottle from far Oceanides come floating from wave to wave directly to Tarascon? And then that "as ever, dead," did not that betray a hoax? Nevertheless, this omen interfered with the triumph of Tartarin.

IV.

Embarkation of La Tarasque. En avant! The bees leave the hive. Indian odours, and the odours of Tarascon. Amusements of the voyage.

TALK of the picturesque!

If you had seen the deck of the "Tutu-pan-pan" on that morning in May, 1881 — there indeed was the picturesque! All the directors in full dress: Tournatoire, sanitary director-general; Costecalde, director of agriculture; Bravida, general-in-chief of the militia, and a score of others, presenting to the eye a mixture of varied costumes embroidered in gold and silver; many of them wearing also the mantle of grandee of the first class, black and red, with gold lace. In the midst of this bedizened crowd, like a white spot, was Père Bataillet, grand almoner of the colony and chaplain to the Governor.

Above all, the militia glittered. Most of the privates had been despatched in the other boats; hardly any remained behind but the officers, sabre in hand, revolver in belt, shoulders squared, chests protruding under the jaunty dolmans with their frogs and their aiguillettes, proud beyond measure of those splendid boots so brilliantly varnished.

Among the uniforms and the costumes were the dresses of the ladies, shot with many colours, light and bright, scarfs floating in the breeze, and here and there the Tarasconese coifs of the serving-women. Above all this, above the vessel with its glittering brass, above the masts pointing upward to the sky, imagine a glorious sun, the sun of a fête-day, the broad Rhone for the horizon, billowed like a sea, its crests blown back by the mistral, and you will have an idea of the "Tutu-panpan" that morning before she started for Port-Tarascon.

The Duc de Mons was unable to be present at the great departure, being detained in London by an additional issue of stock. Money of course was needed; vessels, crews, engineers, all the costs of emigration had to be paid. The duke announced the receipt of funds that very morning, in a telegraphic despatch; and every one admired the practical side of the man of the North.

"What an example he sets us, gentlemen!" declared Tartarin, adding: "Let us imitate him. . . No swagger! . ." It is true that he himself was very calm, very simple, without the least *fla-fla* in the midst of his gorgeous administrators; the grand cordon of the Order his sole decoration, worn in saltire across his overcoat.

From the deck of the "Tutu-panpan" the colonists were seen approaching from a distance, by groups, turning the corners of the streets and debouching on the quay, where they were recognized and saluted by name.

"Ha! here come the Roquetaillades! . ."

"*Té!* Monsieur Branquebalme!"

Whereupon, shouts and bravos, very enthusiastic! Among others, an ovation was made to the old Dowager Countess d'Aigueboulide, almost a centenarian, when she was seen actively climbing aboard wrapped in a puce-coloured mantle, her head shaking, but carrying in one hand a foot-warmer and in the other her old stuffed parrot.

The town appeared to empty itself, minute by minute; the streets seemed wider between the deserted houses, the shops with their shutters up and all blinds closed.

Every one being at last aboard, there came a moment of meditation, of solemn silence, accompanied by the hissing of the steam under pressure. Hundreds of eyes turned to the captain, standing motionless on the bridge, ready to give the order to trip anchor. Suddenly some one cried out:

"Where's La Tarasque? . ."

It cannot be that you never heard tell of La Tarasque . . . that fabled animal which gave its name to the city of Tarascon? To recall its history briefly — this Tarasque, in very ancient times, was a terrible monster which ravaged the Mouths of the Rhone. Saint Martha, coming to Provence after the death of Jesus, went, clothed all in white, into the marshes in search of the dreadful beast, and brought it with her into the town, bound only by a blue ribbon, and tamed, conquered, captivated by the innocence and piety of the saint.

Ever since then the Tarasconese have celebrated, once in ten years, a commemorative festival, during

which they lead through the streets a monster of painted wood and cardboard, something between a turtle, a snake, and a crocodile,—a coarse and burlesque effigy of La Tarasque of other days, venerated now as an idol, lodged at the cost of the State, and known, far and wide throughout the region, by the name of *La mère-grand.*

To leave their native place without *La mère-grand* seemed to them all impossible. A few young men sprang ashore, fetched her and brought her rapidly to the quay. On which an explosion of tears, shouts of enthusiasm, as if the soul of the town, of their native land itself, breathed in that pasteboard monster, which proved so difficult to get aboard.

Much too big to find a place inside the ship, La Tarasque was lashed upon the poop; and there, preposterous, enormous, the air of a goblin monster with her canvas belly and her painted scales, her head stretched high above the bulwarks, she completed the fantastic and picturesque ensemble of the scene, and recalled to mind those carved Chimæras on the prows of triremes, appointed to preside over the fortunes of the voyage. The colonists clustered round her with respect, some spoke to her, others patted her with their hands.

Observing this emotion, the Governor feared it might awaken in some hearts regret for the quitted country, and he hastily made a sign to Captain Scrapouchinat, who promptly ordered in a voice of thunder:—

"Engine ahead! . ."

Immediately the trumpets sounded, together

with the hissing of the steam and the churning of the water by the screw, mastered however by the voice of Excourbaniès: "*Fen dé brut* — let us make a noise! . ." The shore fled away at a bound; the town, the towers of King René retreated to the horizon, growing smaller and smaller till they seemed but a mist in the quivering light of the sun upon the water.

The colonists, one and all, leaning on the bulwarks, smiling, indifferent, watched their country leaving them, disappearing away "down there," with no more emotion, now that they had their Tarasque with them, than a swarm of bees changing their hives to the rattle of kettles, or a great triangle of wild geese on their flight to Africa.

And truly, she did protect them, that Tarasque of theirs. Divine weather, resplendent seas, not a tempest, not a gust, — never was a voyage more favourably begun.

In the Suez canal, there was some hanging out of tongues, for the sun was hot, in spite of the colonial headgear adopted by all, taking pattern by Tartarin, to wit: a cork cap, covered with white linen and furnished with a green gauze veil. But, after all, they did not suffer so very much from that furnace-like temperature, to which they had long been acclimated by the skies of their own Provence.

After Port-Saïd and Suez, after Aden and the Red Sea, the "Tutu-panpan" launched herself full into the Indian Ocean, with rapid, steady course beneath a white and milky sky, smooth as

one of those creamy pomatum-like garlic sauces which the emigrants were eating at every meal.

The amount of garlic that was consumed on board! . . An enormous supply of it had been shipped, and its delicious fragrance marked the track of the ship, mingling the odours of Tarascon with the odours of Ind.

Soon they sailed among islands emerging from the sea like bouquets of unknown flowers; where gorgeous birds arrayed in jewels hovered. The calm, translucent nights, illumined by myriads of stars, seemed traversed with waves of distant melodies and the dances of bayadères. At the Maldives, at Ceylon, and at Singapore they might have made most divine excursions, but the Tarasconese ladies, Mme. Excourbanièss at their head, forbade their husbands to go ashore. A ferocious instinct of jealousy put them all on guard against that dangerous climate of the Indies and its enervating effluvias, which floated upward even to the deck of the "Tutu-panpan." One had only to see at eventide the timid Pascalon leaning on the bulwarks beside Mlle. Clorinde des Espazettes, a tall and beautiful young girl whose aristocratic charm attracted him. The good Tartarin smiled in his beard upon them from a distance, foreseeing a marriage on arrival.

To all, from the very beginning of the voyage, the Governor showed a kindness, an indulgence, which contrasted with the violence and surliness of Captain Scrapouchinat, a veritable tyrant on his ship, who got angry at the least word and instantly

threatened to "shoot you like a green monkey." Tartarin, patient and reasonable, submitted to the tantrums of the captain, tried even to excuse them, and in order to divert the wrath of his militia, he set them an example of indefatigable activity.

His morning hours were devoted to the study of the Papuan language, under the direction of his chaplain, the R. P. Bataillet, who, in his capacity of former missionary, had learned that language and many others. In the afternoons the Governor assembled his people either in the saloon or on deck, and held conferences, in which he put forth his freshly acquired knowledge about the planting of sugar-cane and fishing for trepang.

Twice a week he gave lectures on hunting; because "down there," in the colony, game was plentiful; not as it was at Tarascon, where sportsmen were reduced to firing at caps in the air.

"You fire straight, my children, but you fire too fast," Tartarin would say.

Their blood was hot, it had to be tempered. He gave them excellent advice, teaching them the time they ought to take for the different species of animals, counting it methodically, as if with a metrometer.

"For woodcock, three counts. One, two, three . . . pan! . . and there it is. . . For partridges" — and waving his open hand he imitated the flight of a covey — "for partridges, count only two. One, two . . . pan! . . Pick it up, killed."

Thus the monotonous hours of the voyage went by, every whirl of the screw bringing nearer and

nearer the realization of the dreams of these worthy people, who deluded themselves the whole way with glorious projects for the future, nursing their illusions of what awaited them "over there," and talking only of establishments, agricultural enterprises, imaginary improvements of their future property.

Sunday was a day of rest, a fête-day. Père Bataillet said mass with great pomp on the after-deck; the bugles sounding, the drums beating at the elevation of the host. After the mass the Reverend Father always related one of those ardent parables in which he excelled, less a sermon than a poetic mysticism, all alive with meridional faith.

Here is one of his narratives, artless as the story of saints told on the old stained glass of a village church; but in order to enjoy its full charm, you must imagine the freshly washed decks of the ship and its shining brasses, the ladies ranged in a circle, the Governor in his cane arm-chair, the militia in double ranks, the sailors about the shrouds, and all these people silent, attentive, their eyes fixed on the Father as he stood erect on the steps of the altar. The beating of the screw rhythmed his voice; on the pure, deep sky the steamer's smoke was floating straight and slender; the dolphins gambolled on the surface of the waves; the sea-birds, gulls and albatrosses, followed, screaming in the wake of the ship; and the White-Father looked, as he lifted and shook his large white sleeves, like one of those great sea-birds himself, flapping its wings and ready for its flight.

V.

The true legend of Antichrist, related by the Reverend Father Bataillet on the deck of the "Tutu-panpan."

AGAIN I lead you into paradise, my children, into that vast blue antechamber, where stands the great Saint Peter, his bunch of keys at his belt, always ready to open his door to the souls of the elect, when any such present themselves. Unhappily, for years and years mankind has been so wicked that the best of them, after death, stop in purgatory without getting higher; and that good Saint Peter has nothing to do but rub up his rusty keys with sandpaper, and sweep down the cobwebs hanging across his door like probate seals. Now and then he has a delusion that some one raps, and he says to himself: —

"At last! . . Here 's one, and none too soon, either . . ."

Then, the wicket being open, nothing but immensity, eternal silence, planets motionless, or rolling in space with the soft sound of a ripe orange detaching itself from its twig — but not the shadow of an Elect.

Just think what humiliation for that good saint, who loves us so truly; and how he grieves day and night, with burning, consuming tears, which have

ended by ploughing two great ruts the whole length of his cheeks, like those you see on the carrier's road between Tarascon and Montmajour.

One day Saint Joseph came to keep him company; because in the long run he was bored, that poor gate-keeper, always alone in his antechamber; and Saint Joseph said to him, to comfort him: —

"Now, really and truly, what does it signify to you if those people down below never come to your wicket? . . Are not you very well off here, enjoying the softest music and the sweetest smells? . ."

And while he thus spoke, from the depths of the seven heavens, all opening in a suite, came a warm breeze laden with sounds and perfumes, of which nothing can give you the least notion, my dear friends, not even the taste of mint-balm and fresh strawberries which the sea-breeze is now wafting to us from that great bouquet of rosy islands lying out there on its track.

"Hey!" exclaimed good Saint Peter, "I am only too well-off in this most blessèd paradise, but I want to have all those poor souls with me. . ."

Then, suddenly seized with indignation, he added: —

"Ah! the villains, ha! the fools. . . No, don't you see, Joseph, the Lord is much too good to such wretches. . . If I were in his place I know what I should do."

"What would you do, my good Peter?"

"*Tè! pardi!* I 'd give a good kick into the ant-hill, and *Va te promener*, Humanity!"

Saint Joseph shook his hoary beard. . . "'T would have to be terribly hard, that kick, to demolish the world. . . I don't say the Turks, the Infidels, and all those Eastern peoples that are rotting away, but the Christian world . . . that 's anchored . . . solid . . . built by the Son. . ."

"Precisely," replied Saint Peter. . . "What Christ has built, Christ can destroy. If I were the Lord I would send my Divine Son a second time to those galley-slaves down there; and this Antichrist, who should be Christ disguised, would soon send 'em all to the right about."

The good saint spoke in anger, without really thinking what he said; above all, without supposing that his words would be repeated to the Lord; his surprise was therefore great when, all of a sudden, the Son of Man stood before him, a little bundle on his shoulder at the end of his staff, and said in his firm and gentle voice: —

"Peter, come. . . I take thee with me."

From the pallor of Jesus' face, from the flame of his great hollow eyes which were casting more fire than his halo, Peter comprehended instantly, and he regretted having said so much. What would n't he give if this second mission of the Son of God to earth might not take place, and, above all, that he himself might not be obliged to go too. Aghast, he raised his trembling hands.

"Ah! my God . . . ah! my God. . . And my keys, what am I to do with them? . ." — It is true

that for so long a journey that heavy bunch was not at all convenient. — "And my gate? who will keep that?"

At these words Jesus smiled, reading to the depths of his heart, and said: —

"Leave them in the lock, Peter. . . There is no danger of any one trying to get in, as you very well know."

He spoke gently; but, all the same, there was something implacable in his smile and in his voice.

As was written in Holy Scripture, signs in the heavens announced the coming on earth of the Son of Man; but inasmuch as the human beings who grovelled there never looked up to the sky, being wholly concerned with their own passions, nothing informed them of the presence of the Master and of the old servant who accompanied him. And besides, the two travellers had brought a change with them, and could therefore disguise themselves as much as they liked.

Now it happened that in the first town they came to, on the evening before a famous bandit named Sanguinarius, guilty of awful crimes, was to be executed, the workmen employed in putting up the scaffold during the night were surprised to see, working with them by torchlight, two journeymen, coming from no one knew where, one, supple and proud as the bastard of a prince, with a forked beard, and eyes like jewels, the other bent, good-natured and sleepy-looking, with two long scars

on his withered cheeks. At daylight, when the scaffold was set up, and all the people and the authorities were formed in a circle to witness the execution, the strangers had disappeared, leaving the machinery so bewitched that when the executioner stretched the condemned man on the plank, the knife, although it was good steel and well-sharpened, fell twenty times without so much as breaking the skin.

You can see the picture of it before you: the frightened magistrates, the horrified crowd, the executioner knocking about his aids and tearing his hair all soaked with sweat; Sanguinarius himself — he belonged in Beaucaire, naturally, that scoundrel! and he joined to all his other evil instincts a diabolical self-conceit — Sanguinarius, much vexed, twisted his black bull neck about in the collar, calling out: "Ah ça! . . what's the matter with me? I'm not made like other men if they can't put an end to me. . ."

And the final end of it was the gendarmes were obliged to carry him off by force and put him back in his dungeon, while the howling mob danced round the scaffold, which flamed and crackled up to heaven like the fire of Saint John.

Henceforth in that town, and throughout the whole civilized earth, a spell was cast on all the condemnations of human justice. The sword of the law no longer cut; and as murderers fear nothing but death, soon a flood of crimes covered the whole world; streets and roads became unsafe for terrified honest folk; while in all the

prisons, crammed to the roof, the cut-throats waxed fat on the best beef broth, cleft the heads of the jailers with their sabots, gouged out their eyes with their thumbs; and sometimes, out of simple curiosity, unscrewed their heads and took them to pieces to see what they had inside.

In presence of this great havoc caused in humanity by nothing more than the mere disarming of Justice, the good Saint Peter thought there had been enough; so he said, with the deprecating laugh of a courtier, his heart swelling with pity: —

"The lesson has succeeded, Master; I think they will remember it. . . Nevertheless, suppose we go up again. . . The fact is, I own to you, I am afraid they need me, up there."

The Son of Man wore a pallid smile.

"Remember," he said, with uplifted finger, "what Christ has built, Christ alone can destroy. . ."

And Peter remembered, his head bent down.

"I said too much; my poor children! I said too much."

At this moment they found themselves on fertile slopes, at the foot of which a rich imperial city stretched out of sight, with its domes, terraces, belfries, towers, and cathedral steeples, on which crosses of all shapes, in marble and gold, glittered in the glow of a tranquil sunset.

"I hope they have convents and churches in these parts," said the good old man, hoping to turn away the wrath of the Lord; "that would be a pleasure at any rate."

But you know, my friends, that what Jesus despises above everything is the sumptuous and hypocritical worship of the Pharisees, those churches where they go to mass for fashion, and those convents that make liqueurs and chocolate; so he hurried along without answering, and, as the harvest was then very nigh, all that could be seen of the destroyer of humanity above the wheat ears was the bundle of clothing at the end of his long staff bobbing about. . .

Now in this particular city they were just then entering, there lived an old, old emperor, the eldest of all the princes of Europe, also the most just, the most powerful among them, who held War chained to the axles of his cannon, and prevented the Peoples, by force of persuasion, from eating each other up.

As long as he was there it was tacitly agreed between dog and wolf that the flocks should browse in peace . . . but afterwards! oh! then beware! And this was why the world was so anxious about the life of the good emperor; not a mother who would n't have opened her veins to give him richer and redder blood.

But suddenly, all this love was turned to hate when the following infernal order was circulated:

"Kill him. . . This is the *good* tyrant, the most execrable of them all, because he does not give us any right to revolt."

And beneath the palace, mined, dynamited, in the cellars where the conspirators were busy in water to their waists, I leave you to guess who was

that mysterious being with the flaming eyes, who led the work of death, closing all hearts to fear, to pity, and, when the mine exploded, giving one supreme "Hurrah! . ."

Ah! the poor emperor, not much of him was found in the rubbish, — a few hairs of reddish beard, a sceptre of justice twisted by the shock. And immediately unmuzzled War began to roar; the heavens were black with vultures assembling at the frontiers; the great killings began again, and have never yet ended.

While the Peoples were destroying one another by means of their horrible inventions, while on all sides of the horizon captured cities were blazing like torches, while the roads were encumbered with routed cattle and waggons without drivers, and the fields by the wayside were barren, the rivers red with blood, the vineyards and the cornfields pitilessly ruined, Jesus continued his way, still with his staff and its bundle on his shoulder, and at his heels the good old saint, vainly endeavouring to melt him.

At last they reached a distant land, where a famous doctor practised, whose name was Mauve.

Monsieur Mauve, mighty healer of men and beasts, directing at will all the forces of Nature, had very nearly discovered the means of prolonging human life; he was almost there, within an ace of it, when one night by the thoughtlessness of a new boy in his laboratory — very noble-looking, very pallid, and who was never seen again —

several bottles filled with subtle poisons were left uncorked, and in the morning M. Mauve, on opening the door, fell rigid, asphyxiated.

In consequence of this event human life was not prolonged, but very much the contrary; for the learned man had collected in his house for study an untold quantity of ancient plagues, extraordinary leprosies of Egypt and the middle ages, the germs of which, escaping from their cylinders, spread themselves over the earth and decimated it. There were rains of frogs, infected and filthy, as in the days of the Hebrews; and fevers, yellow, malignant, quartan, tierce, and secondary, plagues, typhus, a mass of lost diseases now grafted on the new ones, and another, not as yet understood, which the people over there called the " malady of Monsieur Mauve."

God preserve you, my children, from that awful malady! The bones melt like glass, the muscles twist together. Men suffer so much they cannot moan; before they die they fall to bits, they drop into *bouillie* along the roads; there are not spades enough nor carts enough to pick them up.

" Ha! ha! there 's a good thing done! . . " said Saint Peter, affecting a false joy, through which the tears were rolling. " And now, Master, suppose we go home . . . I am beginning to feel very weary."

Jesus knew well that that weariness was only put on to cover a great pity for humanity; and he, although so good, he had vowed to exterminate humanity to the very last man. It ought here to

be said they had done him such harm! . . and one wearies of that in the end. . .

After that, continuing his way without reply, he walked out into the country with his old attendant, on a verdant, rosy morn, when, louder than the crowing of the cocks and the insect hum that salutes the coming of day, a human clamour reached their ears, a woman's cry, rising in waves, spasmodically, sometimes immense, rending the horizon, sinking then to a long, soft moan, which those who once have heard it can never again mistake — in the dawn of that day a human being was entering the world. Jesus, full of thought, stood still. If men were being born perpetually, of what use was it to destroy them? . . Turning to the cot whence the cry had come, he raised his hand as if to threaten.

"Pity! . . Master! pity for the little ones," sobbed poor Saint Peter.

Jesus turned and reassured him with a word: —

"I have given to this child and to all born after him a gift of welcome."

Saint Peter dared not ask what it was, but I can tell you, my friends. Jesus had given them *experience:* ah! poor lambs, that is something terrible.

Just think that up to that day when a man died his experience died with him. But now, after this gift of Jesus, there was laid upon the earth accumulated experience. Infants were born sad, old, discouraged; hardly were their eyes open before they saw the end of all things, and the world

beheld that awful thing — the suicide of children, of little children, seeking to escape by death their hopeless fetters.

And yet, all this was not enough; the accursèd race would not be made extinct; it was resolved to live at any cost.

Then, to end the quicker, Christ took from men and women the taste of love, the sentiment of beauty. No longer was there any joy of any kind on earth; no more effusion of the soul in prayer, in pleasure. Men asked only for forgetfulness, they longed for sleep... Oh! to sleep... to think no more, to live no longer...

Poor humanity! it was, as you see, in a very sad state, though perhaps not for long, because that ruthless exterminator hastened, more and more, his work. He roamed the world, a wandering traveller, his bundle on his shoulder, his companion behind him, who was weary indeed, much bent, the furrows of his cheeks deepening with his tears as the Master unchained convulsions, cyclones, earthquakes, volcanoes along his way.

At last, on a fine Assumption morning, when Jesus walked upon the sea, gliding along the surface of the waves, as we are told in Holy Writ, he came among the isles of the Oceanides, in those very same latitudes of the Pacific where we are now.

From a bouquet of verdant islands there came to him, wafted on the seabreeze, the voices of women and of children, singing canticles of Provence.

"*Tè!*" exclaimed Saint Peter; "would n't one say it was Tarascon?"

Jesus turned half round.

"Bad Christians, I think, those Tarasconese?"

"Oh! Master, no, they have mended their ways since those times," the kind saint hastened to say, fearing that on a sign from that divine hand the island they were now approaching might be swallowed by the billows.

That island — you have already guessed it — was no other than Port-Tarascon, where the inhabitants, in honour of the Assumption, were making a solemn procession.

And what a procession, my children!

First came the Penitents, all the Penitents, blue, white, gray, and the other colours; preceded by bells mingling together their crystal, silvery notes. After the Penitents, the sisterhoods of women, in white, with long white veils like the saints in Paradise. Next came the banners with those tall figures of saints, their halos worked in gold on the silken tissues, seeming to descend from heaven to hover above the crowd. The Holy Sacrament came next, beneath its dais of red velvet, very slow, very solemn, surmounted by plumes and surrounded by the choir-boys, bearing, at the end of tall gilded sticks, green lanterns in which were burning little tapers. Then all the people followed, young and old, singing and praying, as long as they had breath.

The procession marched around the island, sometimes on the shore, sometimes on the hill-slopes,

sometimes on the summits, where the great censers, swinging in the breeze, sent a light-blue vapour to the sun.

Saint Peter, dazzled, murmured: —

"Oh how beautiful!" Not a word more — for now, after making so many vain attempts, he despaired of softening his companion; but just here he was mistaken.

The Son of Man, touched to the heart by the transports of an artless faith, gazed at the banners of Port-Tarascon, and standing motionless on the billows, he regretted, for the first time, his mission of death.

Suddenly he raised his pale and gentle face, and, in the silence of that calmed sea, he cried to heaven, in a voice that filled the universe: —

"Father! Father! respite!"

Without another word they understood each other, Father and Son, across the clear expanse.....

Père Bataillet had reached this point in his narrative. The silent audience was standing motionless in their places and deeply moved, when suddenly, from the bridge of the "Tutu-panpan," the voice of Captain Scrapouchinat was heard to shout: —

"The island of Port-Tarascon is in sight, Monsieur le Gouverneur. Within an hour we shall be in the roadstead."

Then every one was alive, and great was the uproar.

VI.

The arrival at Port-Tarascon. Nobody. Disembarkation of the militia. PHARMA . . . BÉZU . . . *Bravida opens communications. Terrible catastrophe. A tattooed apothecary.*

"WHAT the devil does this mean? . . no one to meet us! . ." said Tartarin, the tumult of the first shouts of joy subsiding.

No doubt the ship had not yet been made out on shore.

They must announce themselves. The roar of three cannon-shot rolled across the two long islands of a lush green, a rheumatic green, between which the steamer was now entering.

All eyes were turned to the nearest shore, a narrow strip of sand a few yards wide; beyond it, steep slopes entirely covered with a ragged, rusty verdure, from the summit of the hills to the shores of the sea.

When the echo of the cannon-shots had passed away, a great silence fell once more upon those isles of evil aspect. Nobody! and more inexplicable still, neither port, nor fort, nor town, nor jetty, nor dock could be seen . . . nothing, absolutely nothing!

Tartarin turned towards Captain Scrapouchinat, who was already giving orders to anchor.

"Are you quite sure, captain? . ."

The irascible mariner answered by a salvo of oaths. Was he sure, *coquin de sort!* . . Perhaps he did n't know his business! . . In the name of thunder! yes, he knew enough to sail a ship! . .

"Pascalon, fetch me the map of the island. . ." said Tartarin, still very calm.

Fortunately he possessed a map of the colony drawn to large scale, on which were minutely given the capes, gulfs, rivers, mountains, and even the situation of the principal buildings of the town. It was instantly spread out, and Tartarin, surrounded by the colonists, began to study it, following each point with his finger.

"That 's right. Here, Island of Port-Tarascon . . . other island opposite; there . . . promontory something . . . there it is. . . To left the coral reefs . . . precisely. . . But . . . then . . . what? The town, the port, the inhabitants — what has become of them all?"

Pascalon, timidly stuttering, suggested that perhaps it was some trick of Bompard, so well known in Tarascon for his practical jokes.

"Bompard perhaps," said Tartarin; "but Bézuquet, a man of such prudence, so serious. . . Besides, joker you may be, but you can't juggle away a town, and a port, and docks."

On nearer view something was seen on the shore that looked like a hut, but the coral reefs did not allow of the ship being brought any nearer to land, and at such a distance everything blended with the dingy green of the foliage.

Much perplexed, they all looked at one another, ready to disembark, packages in hand, the old dowager d'Aigueboulide carrying her parrot and her foot-warmer. In the general stupefaction the voice of the Governor was heard murmuring in a low voice: "Very extraordinary indeed!" Suddenly he straightened himself up.

"Captain, man the yawl. Commander Bravida, sound the call for the soldiery."

While the bugles rang and the drums beat, Tartarin, full of confidence, reassured the ladies.

"Fear nothing. All will be explained, undoubtedly. . ."

And to the men, those of them who were not to land: "In one hour we shall return. Await us here; let no one stir."

No one was inclined to stir; they said, as he did: "Yes, Monsieur le Gouverneur, all will be explained, undoubtedly. . ." At that moment Tartarin seemed to them immense.

He took his seat in the yawl, with his secretary Pascalon, his chaplain, Père Bataillet, Bravida, Tournatoire, Excourbanièss, and the soldiery, all of them armed to the teeth, sabres, axes, revolvers, carbines, not forgetting the famous Winchester rifle, 32 calibre.

As they came nearer to that silent shore where nothing stirred, they were able to make out an old wharf of planks and joists, rotten and moss-grown in the slimy water. That this could be the jetty on which the natives had welcomed the passengers of the "Farandole" seemed incredible. A little

farther on, stood a species of old barrack, its windows closed with iron shutters painted in red lead, which threw a bloody reflection into the stagnant water. A plank roof covered it, disjointed, fissured.

As soon as they landed they rushed there. A ruin! within as well as without. Broad strips of sky could be seen through the roof; the warped floor was rotting and crumbling away; enormous lizards darted among the fissures; black creatures swarmed along the walls, while viscous toads were squatting in the corners. Tartarin, entering first, only just missed stepping on a snake as thick as a man's arm. Everywhere, a mouldy smell of rottenness, sickening and fetid.

A few fragments of partitions still standing showed that the barrack had been divided into narrow compartments like the stalls of a stable or the cabins of a ship. On one of these partitions appeared, in letters a foot high, the words: PHARMA . . . BÉZU . . . The rest had disappeared, mildewed away; but it did not need a scholar to divine the whole: *Pharmacy Bézuquet.*

"I see how it is," said Tartarin, "this side of the island was found unhealthy, and after an attempt at colonization they have gone to the other side and settled there."

Then, in a decided voice, he gave orders to Commander Bravida to make a reconnaissance at the head of the troops; he was to push on to the summit of the mountain, and from there explore the land. Undoubtedly he would then see smoke from the chimneys of the town.

"As soon as you have opened communications, you will let us know by a volley of musketry."

As for himself, he stayed below, at headquarters with his secretary, his chaplain, and a few others.

Bravida and his lieutenant, Excourbaniès, deployed their men and started. The soldiery advanced in good order, but the rising ground, covered with an algous moss and very slippery, made marching difficult, and before long the ranks were broken.

They crossed a little brook, on the banks of which were still some vestiges of a wash-house, a forgotten tub, a rubbing-board, green with that all-devouring, overwhelming moss which covered every step of the way. A little farther on were traces of another building, which seemed to have been a blockhouse. The orderly advance of the soldiery was now put an end to finally by encountering innumerable holes in the ground very close to one another, treacherously masked by a vegetation of brambles and creepers. Several of the men fell down, with a great clatter of arms and caparisons, dislodging in their fall great numbers of huge lizards. The holes were not deep, nothing more than shallow excavations, dug out in lines.

"One would really think it an old cemetery," remarked Lieutenant Excourbaniès. This idea was suggested by a vague appearance of crosses made of interlaced branches, now returned to their native condition and clasped by the tendrils of the wild grape vine. In any case, an abandoned cemetery; for no trace of bones remained.

After a painful climb through tangled brushwood, they reached the heights at last. There a healthier air was breathed, a fresh breeze laden with the salt sea odours. Before them lay a very wide moorland, beyond which the land sloped away invisibly, to the sea; the town, no doubt, was there.

A soldier, with extended finger, pointed to some rising smoke, while Excourbaniès called out in joyous tones: "Listen! . . tambourines . . . the farandole!"

There was no mistaking that; yes, that sound was indeed the hopping, skipping vibration of the tune of the farandole. Port-Tarascon was on its way to meet them. Already they could see the inhabitants, a crowd of them, emerging above the slope at the farther extremity of the plateau.

"Halt!" cried Bravida, suddenly, "they look to me like savages."

At the head of the party, in front of the tambourines, danced a tall black man, very lean, in a sailor's striped jersey, with blue glasses on his eyes, and brandishing a tomahawk. Both sides stopped short and observed each other at a distance. Suddenly Bravida burst out laughing. "Ha! this is too much," he cried. "That wag Bompard!" and sheathing his sabre he started to run forward. His men called to him: "Commander! . . commander! . ." He did not listen to them, but ran on; and, thinking he addressed Bompard, he shouted to the dancer, as he neared him: "You are known, old fellow . . . too savage . . . too much of a native! . ."

The other continued to dance and to twirl his weapon; and when the unfortunate Bravida saw at last that he had to do with a real savage it was too late to escape the terrible blow of the tomahawk, which crashed through his cork cap and stretched him dead, with his poor little brains dashed out upon the ground.

At the same instant a tempest of howls, arrows, balls burst forth. On seeing their commander fall, the soldiery fired instinctively and then took to flight, without observing that the savages did likewise.

Below, on the shore, Tartarin heard the volley. "They have opened communications!" he said joyously. But his joy was changed to stupor when he saw his little army returning in disorder, bounding through the woods, some without caps, others without shoes, but all of them uttering one terrified cry: "The savages! . . the savages! . . " Then followed a moment of frightful panic. The yawl pulled off from the shore, and fled by force of oars. The Governor ran along the beach calling out in a quavering voice, the voice of a gull in distress: "Keep cool! . . Keep cool . . . " which redoubled the fears of all.

The pell-mell of the *sauve qui peut* lasted for some moments on that narrow bit of sand; but as it soon became apparent there was nowhere to fly, they ended by collecting in a body. Besides, as no savage showed himself, they were able to recognize and question one another.

"Where is the Commander?"

"Dead."

When Excourbaniès had related the fatal mistake made by Bravida, Tartarin exclaimed: "Unfortunate Placide!.. What imprudence!.. in an enemy's country... Why did he not reconnoitre?.."

He immediately gave orders to post sentries, who, being selected, went off slowly in pairs, firmly resolved not to go very far from their main body. After which the Governor called a council, while Tournatoire dressed the wound of a man, shot by a poisoned arrow, who was swelling visibly to the eye in a frightful manner.

Tartarin spoke first: —

"Before all else, avoid the shedding of blood." And he proposed to send Père Bataillet with a palm-leaf, to be waved from afar, in order to ascertain what the enemy were doing and what had become of the other occupants of the island.

Père Bataillet cried out against that: "Ha! *Vaï*... Palm-leaf! I'd rather have your Winchester and its 32 calibre."

"Well then! if the Reverend will not go, I will go myself," said the Governor. "Only, you must accompany me, chaplain, for I do not know enough Papuan..."

"Nor I either," said Père Bataillet; "I don't know any."

"Then what the devil have you been teaching me the last three months. Those lessons I've been taking on the voyage, what language are they?"

Père Bataillet, like the fine Tarasconese that he was, got out of the affair by saying that he did not

know the Papuan of this part of the world, only the Papuan of "over there."

During this discussion a fresh panic occurred; musket-shots were heard in the direction of the sentries, and from the depths of the forest came an agonized voice, crying out, in the accents of Tarascon: —

"Don't fire . . . in heaven's name! . . don't fire! . ."

A minute later there bounded from the brush-wood a hideous, fantastic being, tattooed from head to foot in scarlet and black, which gave him the appearance of a clown in swaddling-clothes. It was Bézuquet.

"*Té!* . . Bézuquet! . ."

"Eh! how are you?"

"Where are the others?"

"And the town, the port, the docks?"

"The town," replied the apothecary, pointing to the barrack, "there it is, all that remains of it; the inhabitants, here" — and he pointed to his own breast. "But first of all, throw me something, quick, about my body, to hide these abominations those wretches have covered me with."

And truly, all the most filthy imaginings of frantic savages had been tattooed on his skin with a sharp instrument.

Excourbanièss hastily gave him his mantle as grandee of the first class, and after being inwardly comforted by a bumper of brandy the hapless Bézuquet began his tale with the accent and the elocution of Tarascon.

Excuse me for inte
tarin, observing that the
the wood gave signs of
would be wiser if your tale
Here, the cannibals might

"Not they. . . Your vol
They have all left the islan
to escape."

Tartarin however insisted
Bézuquet's tale on board, b
cil. The situation was seri
yawl, which was basely keep
tance, and the whole party
where every one was awaitin
of this first reconnaissance.

VII.

Continue, Bézuquet. Is the Duc de Mons an impostor, or is he not? Lawyer Branquebalme. Verum enim vero. A plebiscite. The "Tutu-panpan" disappears below the horizon.

LURID, that odyssey of the first occupants of Port-Tarascon, related in the saloon of the "Tutu-panpan" before the Council of dignitaries, the Governor, the Directors, the Grandees of the first and the second class, and Captain Scrapouchinat with his staff; while above, on deck, the passengers, feverish with anxiety, could hear nothing but the steady hum of the apothecary's bass voice and the violent interruptions of his auditors.

In the first place, no sooner had the "Farandole" left the port of Marseilles than Bompard, provisional governor and leader of the expedition, was suddenly seized with a strange illness, of a contagious nature, he said, and he insisted on being put ashore, handing over his powers to Bézuquet. . . Fortunate Bompard! . . One might almost think he foresaw what awaited them over there.

At Suez, the "Lucifer" was found in too bad a condition to continue the voyage, and her whole cargo and passengers were transshipped to the

deception of finding nothi
nor port, nor buildings of a
need to stretch themselves,
that the landing upon that d
them a comfort, a joy. The
the registrar, had even cheer
song on the "Oceanic Census
serious reflections.

"We then decided," said Be
ship to Sydney to bring back
and to send you the warn
received."

From all sides protestations.

"Warning telegram! . ."

"What telegram? . ."

"We received no despatch. . .

The voice of Tartarin rose a

"As for a telegram, my dear
ceived only one, that in which yo
reception given you by the native
ing of the Te Deum in the cath

The eyes of the apothecary
stupefaction.

"A Te Deum in the cathedral! w

"All will be explained. . .
quet . . ." said Tar. . .

And his narrative grew more and more lugubrious. The colonists had set manfully to work. Provided with agricultural implements they began to clear the ground; but the soil was so execrable nothing grew. Then came the rains. . .

A cry from the audience interrupted the orator.

"What! it rains?"

"Rains! I should think so! More than at Lyons . . . more than in Switzerland . . . ten months of the year."

Consternation. All eyes were turned to the portholes, through which a heavy fog could be seen, a stationary cloud on the black green, the rheumatic green of the slopes.

"Continue, Ferdinand," repeated Tartarin.

And Bézuquet continued.

With perpetual rains, stagnant waters, fevers, and malaria, the cemetery was soon inaugurated. To real illness were added ennui, languor, homesickness. The most valiant no longer had courage to work, so weakened were their bodies by the soaking climate. They lived on potted food, and on lizards and even snakes, brought to them by the Papuans camped on the other side of the island, who, under pretence of selling to them the produce of their fishing and hunting, slipped astutely into the colony without any one mistrusting them. So that one fine night the savages invaded the barrack, rushing like devils through doors, windows, and holes in the roofs, seized the weapons and massacred all who attempted to resist, and carried off the others to their encampment.

For one whole month those wretches had an uninterrupted succession of horrible feasts. All the prisoners in turn were clubbed to death and roasted on hot stones in the ground, like sucking pigs, and then devoured by the savage cannibals. . .

The cry of horror emitted by the Council carried terror upon deck, and the Governor had scarcely strength to murmur again: "Continue, Ferdinand."

The apothecary had thus seen all his companions, one by one, disappear; even the gentle Père Vézole, smiling and resigned, thanking God to the last, and the notary Cambalalette, the jovial registrar, who made his last joke upon a gridiron.

"And the monsters made me eat him, that poor Cambalalette," added Bézuquet, shuddering still at the recollection.

In the silence that followed, the bilious Costecalde, yellow, his mouth quite distorted with rage, turned to the Governor and said: —

"Did you not tell us, did you not write and cause to be written that there were no anthropophagi?"

And as the Governor bowed his head, completely overcome, Bézuquet exclaimed: —

"No anthropophagi! . . They are one and all anthropophagi. There's no greater feast for them than human flesh, especially ours, the whites of Tarascon, so that when they had done eating the living they turned to the dead. Did you see the cemetery? Not a bone left in it; they raked and

scraped up every one and licked them clean as plates are licked with us when the soup is good and served with a dash of garlic."

"But you, Bézuquet," asked a grandee of the first class, "how came you to be spared?"

The apothecary thought that, having lived among bottles and soaked himself, so to speak, in pharmaceutical products, peppermint, arsenic, arnica, ipecacuanha, and the like, his flesh might have taken a taste they did not fancy; unless, indeed, for the same cause, his pharmacological odour, they were reserving him as a tid-bit.

The narrative being ended, —

"Now, what are we to do?" asked the Marquis des Espazettes.

"What are you to do? . ." growled Captain Scrapouchinat, in his surly voice; "you are not going to stay here, I should think!"

On all sides they cried out: —

"No! no! most assuredly not. . ."

"Though I am only paid to bring you here," continued the captain, "I am ready to take back all who want to go."

At that moment his defects of temper were forgiven him. They forgot that he had called them "green monkeys," only fit to shoot. They surrounded him, thanked him, stretched out their hands to him. In the midst of the uproar, Tartarin's voice was heard, saying, in a tone of great dignity: —

"You will do as you choose, gentlemen; as for

me, I remain. I have my mission as Governor, and I must fulfil it."

Scrapouchinat roared out: —

"Governor of what, when there is n't anything?"

And all the others: —

"The captain is right, as there is n't anything."

But Tartarin was firm.

"The Duc de Mons has my word, gentlemen."

"He is a swindler, your Duc de Mons," cried Bézuquet; "I always thought so, even before I saw the proofs."

"Where are those proofs?"

"Not in my pocket!" and the apothecary with a chaste gesture drew closer about him the mantle of the first-class grandee that sheltered his tattooed nudity. "One thing is certain, the dying Bompard said to me, when they took him off the 'Farandole,' 'Don't trust that Belgian; he's a liar. . .' He could not tell me more, on account of his illness."

Besides, what better proof was needed than that barren, miasmatic isle, where the duke had sent them to colonize, and all those false despatches? . .

Great excitement now took place in the Council, all talking at once, all agreeing with Bézuquet, and overwhelming the duke with injurious epithets: "liar . . . sharper . . . swindler . . . rascally Belgian! . ."

Tartarin, heroic, held out against them all.

"Until I have proof to the contrary, I reserve my opinion of Monsieur de Mons. . ."

"Opinion! ours is made . . . a thief!"

"He may have been imprudent, ill-informed himself."

"Don't defend him, he deserves the galleys. . ."

"As for me, appointed by him Governor of Port-Tarascon, I shall stay in Port-Tarascon. . ."

"Stay alone, then."

"Alone, so be it, if you abandon me. Leave me the implements of labour. . ."

"But when I tell you that nothing will grow," cried Bézuquet.

"You did not go the right way to work, Ferdinand."

Here Scrapouchinat fell into a fury, striking the council-table with his fist.

"He 's crazy . . . I don't know what prevents me from carrying him off by force, and if he resists, shooting him like a green monkey."

"Try it, *coquin de sort!*"

And Père Bataillet, puffing with wrath, and threatening with his fist, placed himself beside Tartarin. On which, an exchange of violent words and Tarasconese forms of speech: "You 've lost your senses. . . You are talking stuff. . . You are saying things you have no business to say. . ."

And God knows how it would have ended if lawyer Branquebalme, director of justice to the colony, had not intervened.

This Branquebalme was a very fluent lawyer, given to arguments well inlaid with "at any rates" and, "even sos," — discourses firmly built with Roman cement, as solid as the aqueduct of the Pont du Gard. A fine Latin specimen, fed with elo-

quence and Ciceronian logic, deducting always by *verum enim vero*, the *because* from the *because it is.* He took advantage of the first lull to get the floor, and in long and beautiful sentences which rolled out endlessly, he finally advised a plebiscite.

The passengers should be told to vote yes or no, that is those who wished to stay were to stay; those who wished to go were to go in the ship as soon as the carpenters had built a large house and a blockhouse ashore.

This motion of Branquebalme, which made every one harmonious, was adopted at once, and without further ado they proceeded to propose and take the vote.

Much agitation was produced on deck and in the cabins when the news was spread of what was happening. Nothing was heard but grief and moans. These poor people had put their all into the purchase of those famous acres; were they now to lose all, renounce the land they had paid for, and all their hopes of colonizing? Reasons of interest prompted them to stay, but a glance at that dismal landscape drove them back into hesitation. The great barrack in ruins, that black and noisome verdure, behind which they saw in fancy the desert and the cannibals, the prospect of being eaten like Cambalalette — nothing of all that was encouraging, and longing desires turned to the sunny land of Provence, which they had so imprudently abandoned.

The crowd of emigrants ran about the ship like a colony of ants. The old dowager d'Aigueboulide

wandered round the decks, never letting go of her parrot and her foot-warmer. Amid the noise of the discussions that preceded the vote, nothing was heard but imprecations on the Belgian, that dirty Belgian. . . Ha! no longer "M. le Duc de Mons!" . . only "that dirty Belgian." . . They said it with closed teeth and fists doubled.

In spite of all, out of a thousand colonists one hundred and fifty voted to stay with Tartarin. It must be said that most of them were dignitaries whom the Governor had promised to continue in their functions and their titles.

Fresh discussions arose as to the dividing of provisions between the departing and the remaining.

"You can revictual at Sydney," said those of the isle to those of the ship.

"You will hunt and fish; what do you want with all those preserved provisions?" was the reply.

La Tarasque also gave rise to really terrible discussions. Should she return to Tarascon? . . Should she remain with the colony? . .

The dispute was very warm. Several times Scrapouchinat threatened Père Bataillet to put him in irons. To maintain the peace, lawyer Branquebalme again put in requisition all the resources of his Nestorian wisdom, and brought his judicious *verum enim vero* to bear. Nevertheless, he had much difficulty in calming their excited minds, worked upon underhand by that hypocrite Excourbaniès, who desired nothing better than to keep the discord up.

Shaggy, hirsute, and yelling his war-cry: *Fen dé brut!* . . "Let us make a noise!" the lieutenant of the militia was so thoroughly Southern that he was now a negro; not only a negro in the blackness of his skin and the crispiness of his hair, but also in his baseness, in his desire to please; dandling the flattery of success before the strongest wherever he might be; before Scrapouchinat surrounded by his crew on his own deck, before Tartarin in presence of the militia ashore. To each he explained differently the reasons which decided him to vote for Port-Tarascon, saying to Scrapouchinat: —

"I stay because my wife is going to be confined, otherwise. . ."

And to Tartarin: —

"Nothing in the world would induce me to go back with that old ostrogoth. . ."

At last, after much squabbling, the division, good or bad, was made. La Tarasque remained with the ship in exchange for a carronade and a boat; and Tartarin had wrenched, bit by bit, from the vessel, provisions, arms, and farming implements. For several days there was ceaseless going and coming of boats, laden with all sorts of things, guns, preserved meats, boxes of tunny-fish and sardines, swallow-pies and *pains-poires*.

All this while the axe resounded in the woods, where many trees were felled for the repair of the great main building and the blockhouse. The sound of the bugles mingled with the noise of the hatchets and hammers. During the daytime the soldiery under arms guarded the toilers, in fear of

savages; at night they camped upon the shore around the bivouacs, "to break themselves into the service of war," said Tartarin.

When all was ready the two divisions separated, rather coolly. The departing ones were jealous of the staying ones; which did not, however, prevent them from saying, in sarcastic little tones: "If your affair goes well, write us, and we 'll return. . ." On the other side, most of the colonists, in spite of their seeming confidence, would have preferred to be aboard.

The anchor up, a salvo of cannon was fired from the ship, to which the carronade, served by the Reverend Père Bataillet, responded from the shore, while Lieutenant Excourbaniès played upon his clarionet: *Bon voyage, cher Dumollet.*

All the same, when the "Tutu-panpan" had doubled the promontory and finally disappeared from sight, many eyes upon the shore were wet, and the roadstead of Port-Tarascon became suddenly immense.

SECOND BOOK.

I.

MEMORIAL OF PORT-TARASCON.

JOURNAL WRITTEN BY

SECRETARY PASCALON

In which is recorded all that was said and done in the Free Colony under the Government of Tartarin.

SEPTEMBER 20, 1881. I undertake to record here, on this register, the principal events of the colony.

I shall have difficulty in doing so, with all the other work that encumbers me: director of the secretariat; many administrative documents; and then, whenever I have a minute to spare, Provençal verses to scribble in haste; for I must not allow my official duties to kill the Poet within me.

But I shall do my best; and it will be curious, some day, to read the beginnings of a great people. I have spoken to no one, not even to the Governor, of the work which I this day begin.

I note in the first place the happy turn of affairs during the week that succeeded the departure of the "Tutu-panpan." Our people in-

stalled themselves. The flag of Port-Tarascon, which bears La Tarasque quartered on the French colours, floats from the summit of the blockhouse. That is where the Government, I mean our Tartarin, the directors, and their offices, are established. The bachelor directors, like myself, M. Tournatoire, director of health, and Père Bataillet, grand chief of artillery and navy, are lodged in the Government House and eat at the table of the Governor. M. Costecalde and M. Escourbanièes, who are married, eat and sleep in town.

We call "in town" the large house which the carpenters of the "Tutu-panpan" put into repair. They have made a sort of boulevard around it, to which has been given, rather pompously, the name of the Tour-de-Ville, as at Tarascon. Hence the habit has been taken among us of saying: "We are going *in town* this evening." "Did you go *in town* this morning?" "Suppose we go *in town*." It seems quite natural.

The blockhouse is separated from the town by a brook, which we call the Little Rhone. From my desk, when the window is open, I hear the rubbing of the washerwomen stooping over their boards along the bank, their songs and their calls in that Provençal tongue, so sprightly, so glowing, that I almost fancy myself again at home.

One thing alone spoils my life in the Government-House, — the powder magazine. They left us a great quantity of gunpowder, deposited in the cellar with provisions of all kinds: garlic, preserved meats, liquids, reserves of weapons, instruments, and

tools; all of which are carefully padlocked; but no matter, the very thought that we have there beneath our feet such an immense quantity of combustibles and explosive material is enough to fill one with fear, especially at night.

September 25. Yesterday Mme. Excourbaniès was happily delivered of a fine boy, the first citizen inscribed upon the civic registers of Port-Tarascon. He was baptized with great ceremony at Saint-Martha-of-the-Palms, our little provisional church, built of bamboos, and roofed with leaves. I had the happiness of being godfather, and of having with me as godmother Mlle. Clorinde des Espazettes, — rather too tall for me, perhaps, but so pretty, so smart in the rays of light that filtered through the trellis of bamboos and the scarcely joined leaves of the roof.

All the town was there. Our good Governor pronounced such a fine discourse that everybody was touched, and Père Bataillet related one of his prettiest legends. Work of all kind was suspended, as on a fête-day. After the baptism, a promenade was made round the Tour-de-Ville. We were very joyful; it seemed as if the new-born infant brought hope and happiness to the colony. The Government had distributed double rations of tunny-fish and *pains-poires;* and on all tables in the evening smoked an extra dish. We ourselves had a roasted wild pig killed by the marquis, the best shot on the island after Tartarin.

Dinner over, being alone with my kind master, I

felt he was so affectionate, so paternal, that I confided to him my love for Mlle. Clorinde. He smiled, and said he knew it, and promised me to intercede, with other encouraging words. Unhappily, the marquise is a d'Escudelle de Lambesc, very proud of her birth, and I, no more than a simple plebeian. Of good family, certainly; nothing to reproach ourselves with, but having always lived as bourgeois. Also I have my shyness against me, and that slight stuttering. Then, too, I am beginning to get a little bald on the top of my head... Ah! the cares of the secretariat at my age!..

If there were only the marquis! He, *pardi!*.. provided he hunts... He is not like the marquise with her quarterings. To give you an idea of her pride: everybody in town meets in the evening in the large salon. It is very pleasant; the ladies knit, the gentlemen play whist. But Mme. des Espazettes, she is too proud, and she stays with her daughters in their cabin, which is so narrow that when these ladies change their gowns they can only do it one at a time. Well, the marquise prefers to pass her evenings that way, receiving at home, and offering her invited guests, who don't know where to sit down, infusions of linden or chamomile, rather than mingle with the rest, out of a horror for riff-raff. That will show you what she is. However, in spite of all, I have hopes.

September 29. Yesterday the Governor went down into town. He had promised me to speak of my affair and to have something to tell me on his return. You can fancy if I awaited him impa-

tiently! But when he returned he never opened his lips.

During breakfast he was nervous. Talking with his chaplain, these words escaped him: "*Diffé-remment*, we need a few more riff-raff at Port-Tarascon." Now, as Mme. des Espazettes de Lambesc has that contemptuous term "riff-raff" always on her lips, I thought he must have seen her, and that my proposal was ill-received; but I could not find out the truth, for the Governor almost immediately began to talk of the report of director Costecalde on the subject of agriculture.

Disastrous, that report. Fruitless attempts; neither maize, nor wheat, nor potatoes, nothing would grow. There was no loam, no sun, too much water, an impermeable subsoil, all seeds drowned. In short, just what Bézuquet had said, only worse!

I ought to say that the director of agriculture had, perhaps intentionally, put things at their worst, and presented them in their most fatal aspect. Such a bad spirit, that Costecalde! always envious of Tartarin's fame, and spurred up against him by a secret hatred. The Reverend Père Bataillet, who never goes at a thing by four roads, demanded his dismissal; but the Governor, with his lofty wisdom and his habitual moderation, replied: "No castigations. . ." Then, on leaving the table he entered the office of Costecalde, and began in this way, very calm: —

"*Et autrement, Monsieur le directeur*, about these sowings?"

The other replied gruffly, without moving.

"I have sent my report to the Governor."

"Come, come, Costecalde, it is rather severe, your report."

Costecalde turned yellow.

"It is what it is, and if that annoys you. . ."

His voice was insolent, but Tartarin restrained himself because others were present.

"Costecalde," he said, with two flames in his gray eyes, "I will say two words to you when we are alone."

It was terrible; the perspiration ran down my back. . .

September 30. It is just as I feared; my proposal was rejected by the Espazettes; I am of too low an origin. They allow me to visit them as before, but forbid me to hope. . . What can they hope themselves? . . They are the only nobles in the colony. To whom can they give their daughter? . . Ah! Monsieur le marquis, you have dealt most unfairly with me. . .

What shall I do? . . What course must I take? . . Clorinde loves me, I know that; but she is too virtuous to run away with a young man and marry him in another country. Besides, how could she, inasmuch as we are on an island which has no communications with the outer world?

I could understand their refusal if I were still only a pupil in a pharmacy. But now, with my position, my future. . . How many families would esteem themselves fortunate in my proposals! Not to look farther, there is that little Branque-

balme, good musician who plays the piano and teaches her sisters, her parents would be enchanted if I merely raised my finger. . .

Ah! Clorinde, Clorinde. . . Ended, our days of happiness! . . And, as if to put an end to me also, the rain is pouring since morning, pours without stopping; blurring all things, drowning all things, casting its gray veil everywhere. Bézuquet told no lies. It rains at Port-Tarascon, it rains. . . Rain envelops you, shuts you in a wire cage like grasshoppers. No horizons. Rain, nothing but rain. It inundates the earth, it swells the sea, which meets the falling rain with a rising rain of surf and spray. . .

October 3. The Governor's remark was a just one: we need a few more riff-raff! Less quarterings of nobility, less grand dignitaries, a few more masons, roofers, carpenters, and things would go much better in the colony. Last night, under this continual rain, this waterspout, wholly irresistible, the roof of the Great House caved in, and a flood now lies between the town and the Government House. The departments are casting the responsibility on one another. The agriculturists say that the affair concerns the secretariat; the secretariat maintains, and justly, that the matter relates to the health department; the latter refers complainants to the navy, because, they say, the trouble came from the structural works.

In town, they lay the blame on the State of Things, and they do not mince matters.

Meantime, the fissure is enlarging; cascades of water are pouring down, the inhabitants are sitting in their cabins under open umbrellas, scolding, wrangling, soaked, furious, and abusing the Government. Happily, we are not lacking in umbrellas. Among the goods for exchange with savages we found a great quantity, almost as many as there are dog-collars.

But to end this account of the inundation; it was a girl, named Alric, in the service of Mlle. Tournatoire, who climbed the roof and nailed a great sheet of zinc, borrowed from the store-rooms, over the hole. The Governor has ordered me to write her a letter of congratulation. If I mention the incident here it is because this circumstance first showed me the weakness of the colony... Administration excellent, zealous, even complicated and truly French; but for colonizing, forces are lacking, — more documents than muscles.

I am also struck with one thing; and that is that all our big-wigs are placed in charge of the matters for which they are least apt and least prepared. There 's the gunsmith Costecalde who has spent his life among pistols, knives, and the implements of war and hunting; he is director of agriculture. Excourbaniès has not his equal for the manufacture of Arlesian sausages, and now, since the accident to Bravida, they have made him war director and chief of the militia. Père Bataillet is in charge of the artillery and the navy because he had a bellicose temper, but the fact is, what he knows most about is saying mass and

relating stories. In town it is the same thing. There we have a lot of worthy people accustomed to live on small annuities, grocers, confectioners, sellers of printed cotton goods, who now own acres they don't know what to do with, not having the slightest notion of farming.

I see no one but the Governor who really knows his business. Ah! *he*, he knows everything, has seen everything, read everything, and, above all, represents things to himself with such vivacity. . . Unfortunately, he is too good, he is never willing to believe evil. He still maintains his confidence in that Belgian, that scoundrel, that impostor of a Duc de Mons; he still expects him to arrive with colonists, provisions, etc., and every day when I enter his room his first word is: "Any ship in sight this morning, Pascalon? . ."

And to think that a man so benevolent, a Governor so excellent, should have enemies! Yes, enemies already. He knows it, and merely laughs about it. "It is only natural they should be vexed with me," he says to me sometimes, "because *I* am the State of Things."

October 8. Spent the morning in making a census table, which I copy here. This document on the origin of the colony will, at some future time, be interesting, as having been drawn up by one of the Founders, one of the first workers of the colony. A little note is appended to each name, in order to know those who are for or against the Governor. The names of women and children

do not appear on this list because they have no vote.

COLONY OF PORT-TARASCON.

CENSUS TABLE.

NAMES.	TITLES AND QUALIFICATIONS	NOTES.
S. E. TARTARIN.	Governor, grand cordon of the Order.	
TESTANIÈRE (Pascal), called Pascalon.	Director of the Secretariat, grandee of 2d class.	Excellent (I dare to say it).
R. P. BATAILLET.	Director of the artillery and navy, chaplain to the Governor, and grandee of 1st class.	Thinks right, but very excitable.
EXCOURBANIÈS (Spiridion).	Director of war, chief of the militia and of the choral society, grandee of 1st class.	To be watched.
Dr. TOURNATOIRE.	Director of health, physician in chief of the colony, grandee of the 1st class.	Excellent.
COSTECALDE (Fabius).	Director of agriculture, and grandee of the 1st class.	Execrable.
BRANQUEBALME (Cicéron).	Director of justice, and grandee of the 1st class.	Very good, but tiresome.
TORQUEBIAU (Marius).	Sub-director of Secretariat, grandee of 2d class.	Good.
BÉZUQUET (Ferdinand).	Sub-director of health, assistant physician, and apothecary to the colony.	"
GALOFFRE.	Sexton, and warden of the artillery.	Very good.
RUGIMABAUD (Antonin).	Attached to the department of agriculture.	Very bad.
BARBAN (Sénèque).	Attached to the department of agriculture.	" "
Marquis des ESPAZETTES.	Lieutenant of militia.	Good.
BAUMEVIEILLE (Dosithée).	Colonist	"
CAUSSEMILLE (Timothée).	"	"
ESCARAS.	"	"

BARAFORT (Alphonse).	Colonist	Doubtful.
RABINAT (sailor).	"	Good.
COUDOGNAN "	"	Doubtful.
ROUMENGAS "	"	"
DOULADOUR "	"	"
MIÉGEVILLE "	"	"
MAINFORT "	"	"
BOUSQUET "	"	"
LAFRANQUE "	"	"
TRAVERSIÈRE	"	"
BOUFFARTIGUE (Néron).	Confectioner.	"
PERTUS.	Restaurateur.	Very bad.
REBUFFAT.	Pastry-cook.	Good.
BERDOULAT (Marc).	Drummer.	"
FOURCADE.	Bugler.	Good.
BÉCOULET	"	Bad.
VÉZANET.	Militia-man.	Doubtful.
MALBOS.	"	Good.
CAISSARGUE.	"	Very bad.
BOUILLARGUE.	"	" "
HABIDOS.	"	Good.
TROUHIAS.	"	"
REYRANGLADE.	"	"
TOLOZAN.	"	"
MARGOUTY.	"	Doubtful.
PROU.	"	"
TROUCHE	"	Good.
SÈVE.	"	Doubtful.
SORGUE.	"	Good.
CADE.	"	Very good.
PUECH.	"	" "
BOSC.	"	" "
JOUVE.	"	Good.
TRUPHÉNUS.	"	Execrable.
ROQUETAILLADE.	"	"
BARBUSSE.	"	"
BARBOUIN.	"	Bad.
ROUGNONAS.	"	Very good.
SAUCINE.	"	" "
SAUZE.	"	Good.
ROURE.	"	"
BARBIGAL.	"	"
MERINJANE.	"	Doubtful.
VENTEBREN.	"	Good.
GAVOT.	"	Bad.
MARC-AURELLE.	"	Very good.

Coq-de-Mer.	Choral society.	Good.
Ponge (the elder).	" "	"
Gargas.	" "	"
Lapalud.	" "	"
Bezouce.	" "	"
Ponge (junior).	" "	Bad.
Picheral.	" "	Good.
Mézoule.	Hunter.	"
Oustalet.	"	"
Terron (M. A.).	"	"

October 10. The Marquis des Espazettes and several good shots, being unable to go out on account of the rain, took it into their heads to make targets of old tin boxes from which tunny-fish, sardines, and *pains-poires* had been taken, at which they have been firing all day long through the windows. Our old cap-hunters, now that caps and hats are more difficult to replace, have thus become tin-can hunters. Excellent exercise in itself. But Costecalde having persuaded the Governor that it leads to a great waste of powder, a decree has been issued forbidding the hunting of tin cans. The hunters are furious, the nobility sulks; Costecalde and his crew are rubbing their hands.

But why should our poor Governor be blamed? That rascally Belgian deceived him like the rest of us. Is it his fault that it rains incessantly so that they can't have their bull-races on account of the weather? There's a fate against those unlucky races which our Tarasconese were congratulating themselves that they should have when they got here. They even brought cows expressly for that purpose, and a bull from the Camargue, called "the

Roman," famous at all the votive fêtes of the South.

On account of the rains, which prevented pasturage, the animals are kept in a stable, but, lo and behold, nobody knows how — I should not be surprised if Costecalde were at the bottom of it — the Roman has escaped. He roams the forest, perfectly savage, and is now a bison. And it is he who makes the people race instead of his racing for them.

But is that the fault of our Tartarin?

II.

The bull-race at Port-Tarascon. Adventures and combats. Arrival of King Negonko and his daughter Likiriki. Tartarin rubs noses with the king. A great diplomatist.

DAY by day, page by page, with the dreary record of those gray sheets of rain, with the barren and despairing monotony of that outlook on the roadstead, the Memorial, which we have before our eyes, continues its chronicle of the colony; but, fearing to weary my readers, I shall give an epitome of friend Pascalon's journal.

Relations getting more and more strained between "the town" and the Government, Tartarin, in order to recover his popularity, decided to organize the bull-races — not with the Roman, be it understood, for he was still roaming the thickets, but with the cows, three of them, that remained to the colony. Much emaciated, mere skin and bone, were these three miserable animals, accustomed to the open air and the glowing sun, but confined in a damp, dark stable ever since their arrival at Port-Tarascon. No matter! they were better than nothing.

In preparation for the event, a platform with raised seats was erected on a sandy level at the

edge of the sea where the soldiery were accustomed to exercise; and a circus was marked out by means of ropes and picket-posts. Advantage was taken of a stray gleam of fine weather, and the State of Things, wearing his orders, and surrounded by his dignitaries in full costume, took his seat on the platform. The colonists and the military, with their wives and daughters and servants, clustered round the ropes, and the little ones ran into the arena, crying out: "*Té!.. té!..* the bulls!.."

Forgotten at this moment the tedium of those long rainy days, forgotten their griefs against the Belgian, that dirty Belgian: "*Té!.. té!..* the bulls!.." that cry alone made them tipsy with joy.

Hark! a roll of drums.

This was the signal. The invaded arena was cleared in a second, and one of the animals entering the lists was greeted with frenzied hurrahs.

The sight was nothing terrible. A poor, lean, frightened cow, which stared about her with eyes unaccustomed to the light. She stood stock-still in the middle of the arena with a long plaintive lowing, but never stirred, her ribbons hanging between her horns, until the indignant crowd chased her from the enclosure with cudgels.

As for the second cow, that was another affair. Nothing could induce her to come out of the stable. In vain they pushed her and pulled her by the horns and by the tail; in vain they prodded her muzzle with a pitchfork; impossible to make her pass the door.

Well, then, try the third. She was said to be dangerous, that one, very much excited. And sure enough, she entered the arena at a gallop, throwing up the sand with her forked feet, lashing her sides with her tail, and distributing thrusts of her horns to right and left. . . At last, they were going to have a fine race! . . Not a bit of it! . . The beast made a spring, cleared the rope, scattered the crowd with her lowered horns, and rushed, straight before her, into the sea. In water to her knees, then to her withers, she went on and on, until presently nothing was seen but her nostrils and her two crumpled horns above the surface of the sea. There she stayed till evening, morose, silent; while all the colony, assembled on the shore, vilified her, hissed her, flung stones at her — hisses and howls in which the poor State of Things, now descended from his platform, had, alas! his share.

The races a failure, an application of some sort was necessary to draw off the ill-humour of the people. The best was war: an expedition against King Negonko. That scoundrel, after the deaths of Bravida, Cambalalette, Père Vézole, and so many other brave Tarasconese, had fled with his Papuans, and since then nothing had been heard of him. He lived, it was said, on a neighbouring island, two or three leagues distant, the dim outline of which could be seen on a clear day, though it was usually obscured on the horizon by a perpetual mist of rain. Tartarin, by nature pacific, had long held back from any such expedition, but this time policy decided him.

The yawl, put in condition, repaired, provisioned, and mounted in the bows with the culverine served by Père Bataillet and his sacristan Galoffre, twenty militia-men, well-armed, under the orders of Excourbaniès and the Marquis des Espazettes were embarked one fine morning, and all set sail.

Their absence lasted three days, which seemed very long to the rest of the colony. But towards the close of the third day, a shot from the culverine heard in the offing brought every one to the shore, and they saw the yawl coming in, all sail spread, cutting the waves at a rapid pace, as if driven by a wind of triumph. Even before she reached the shore, the joyous shouts of those on board and the *Fen dé brut* of Excourbaniès announced from afar the complete success of the expedition.

They had indeed taken startling vengeance on the cannibals; they had burned a heap of villages, and killed, so they all said, thousands of Papuans. The exact number varied, but it was always enormous. Narratives also differed: what was certain was the fact that they brought with them five or six prisoners of rank, among them King Negonko himself and his daughter Likiriki, who were conducted to the Government House amid an ovation made by the populace to the victors.

The militia defiled, bearing, like the soldiers of Christopher Columbus on their return from the discovery of the New World, all sorts of strange objects: dazzling feathers, skins of beasts, weapons,

"King Negonko walked first, a tall old black man"

and adornments of savages. But the people pressed especially about the prisoners. The worthy Tarasconese examined them with malignant curiosity. Père Bataillet had taken care to cast upon their ebon nudity a few coverings that partially wrapped them; and on seeing them thus muffled, and thinking that those beings had eaten Père Vézole, the notary Cambalalette, and so many others, a shudder of repulsion ran through the crowd like that before the boas of a menagerie digesting their food under the woollen folds of their blankets.

King Negonko walked first, a tall old black man, with the protruding stomach of a sucking child, and white woolly hair that stood out upon his head like a cap; a red clay Marseilles pipe was hanging by a string to his left arm. Near him was the little Likiriki, with the glittering eyes of a gnome, adorned with coral necklaces and bracelets of pink shells. After them came tall monkeys of men with long arms, making horrible grimacing smiles that showed their pointed teeth.

At first a few jokes went round: "Here 's work indeed for Mlle. Tournatoire;" and the good old spinster herself, resuming her fixed idea, began to think how she should clothe those savages; but soon curiosity turned into fury as the thought came uppermost of friends and compatriots eaten by these cannibals.

Cries of: "Death! . . to the death! . . zou!" were heard. Excourbaniès, to give himself a more military air, had adopted the phrase of

Scrapouchinat, and marched along shouting out at the top of his voice: "They ought all to be shot like green monkeys."

Tartarin turned to him, and stopping the furious fellow with a gesture, —

"Spiridion," he said, "let us respect the laws of war."

Do not admire this too ecstatically; those noble words masked, in truth, an act of policy.

Stubborn defender of the Duc de Mons, in his heart of hearts Tartarin held a doubt. Suppose, after all, he had dealt with a swindler?.. The treaty which the duke declared he had made with King Negouko for the purchase of the island would then be false, like all the rest: the territory did not belong to the colony; the stocks and bonds for acres were papers of no value. Therefore the Governor, far from wishing to shoot his prisoners like green monkeys, thought best to give the Papuan king a solemn reception. He knew well how to set about it, having read all narratives of navigators and knowing by heart those of Cook, Bougainville, and d'Entrecasteaux.

He approached the king and rubbed noses with him. The savage appeared surprised, for that custom had not existed for many years among his people. However, he let it be done, thinking it, no doubt, a Tarasconian tradition; and the other prisoners seeing it, even the little Likiki, who had no more nose than a cat, which is scarcely any at all, absolutely insisted on executing the same ceremony with the Governor.

When all noses had been well rubbed, it became necessary to enter into communication with these animals by means of speech. Père Bataillet addressed them in his Papuan of "over there," but as this was not the Papuan of these parts, they naturally did not understand a word of it. Cicéron Branquebalme, who knew a little English, essayed that language. Excourbaniès shouted to them a few words in Spanish; but one had as little success as the other.

"Give them something to eat, at any rate," said Tartarin.

Boxes of tunny-fish were opened. This time the savages comprehended. They flung themselves on the food and devoured it gluttonously, emptying the boxes, and cleaning them out with their fingers, which streamed with oil. Then, after bumpers of brandy, which he seemed to like most particularly, the king, to the utter stupefaction of Tartarin and the others, trolled out in a hoarse voice: —

Dé brin o dé bran
Cabussaran
Dou fenestroun
De Tarascoun
Dedins lou Rose.

That Tarasconese song hiccoughed out by the thick-lipped savage through teeth that were black with betel juice had a most fantastic and ferocious sound. But how could Negonko have acquired the Tarasconese language? . .

After a moment of natural stupefaction the matter explained itself. During their few months' intercourse with the unfortunate passengers of the "Farandole" and the "Lucifer," the Papuans must have learned the language of the banks of the Rhone. They spoke it rather queerly, but, gesture assisting, both parties might succeed in understanding each other.

They did understand each other.

Questioned on the subject of the Duc de Mons, Negonko declared that never in his life had he heard or known of that white man or any other. Consequently the island had never been sold. Consequently there had never been any treaty.

Never any treaty! . . Tartarin, perfectly calm, had one prepared on the spot. The erudite Branquebalme collaborated largely in the rigid and minute drawing up of the document. Into it he put all his knowledge of the law, with numerous "whereases" and "inasmuches;" and with this Roman cement he made a compact and solid whole. King Negonko ceded the island of Port-Tarascon for the indemnity of a barrel of rum, ten pounds of tobacco, two blue cotton umbrellas, and a dozen dog-collars.

A codicil added to the treaty authorized Negonko, his daughter, and his companions, to settle on the western side of the island; that side where none of the colonists ever went on account of the Roman, the bull now turned into a bison, the only dangerous beast on the island.

All this was debated in secret conference, and concluded within a few hours.

Thus, thanks to the diplomatic ability of Tartarin, the acre bonds were made valid, and represented something actual, which, it was now seen, they had never done before.

III.

It still rains. Epidemic of aqueous maladies. Garlic soup. Order of the Governor. "Garlic will give out." "Garlic will not give out." The baptism of Likiriki.

ALL this while, nothing but moisture, nothing but that gray sky and the rain that fell, fell, fell. . . In the town, of a morning, windows were seen to open, hands were stretched out. . .

"It rains!"

Yes, it rained continually, as in Bézuquet's report.

Poor Bézuquet! In spite of the miseries he had endured with his companions of the "Farandole" and the "Lucifer," he elected to remain at Port-Tarascon, not daring to return to Christian lands on account of his tattooing. Reduced to being apothecary and clinical assistant of a low grade under the orders of Tournatoire, the late provisional governor much preferred that fate to exhibiting in civilized countries his unnatural face and his hands picked out with scarlet. But he revenged himself for his miseries by making the most sinister predictions to his companions. When they complained of the rain, of the mud, of the mildew, he shrugged his shoulders.

"Wait," he said, "wait. . . You will see worse things than that."

He was not mistaken. From living soaked through and eating but little fresh food, many fell ill. The cows had long been eaten. Impossible to rely on the hunters, though there were several good shots among them, such as the Marquis des Espazettes, all of them well trained in Tartarin's principles — twice for woodcock, three times for partridges. The devil of it was there were no partridges or woodcock, or anything of the kind, not so much as a gull or a wild-duck, for none of the sea-birds ever came to this side of the island.

Nothing was ever encountered in their hunting excursions but a few wild pigs, and they were rare! or else kangaroos, very difficult to shoot on account of their hopping gait. Tartarin was unable to say accurately how many should be counted for a kangaroo. One day when the Marquis des Espazettes questioned him on this point, he answered, somewhat at random: "Count six, Monsieur le Marquis." Des Espazettes counted six, and caught nothing but a very bad cold under the torrential and unintermitting rain.

"I must go myself," said Tartarin; but he constantly put off the day, on account of the weather, and venison grew scarcer and scarcer. Certainly, those big lizards were not bad, but by dint of eating so many, people ended by taking a horror to that insipid white flesh, which the pastry-cook Bouffartigue potted according to a receipt of the White-Fathers.

To this deprivation of fresh meat we must add the want of exercise. What could they do out of doors in such a rain, in the muddy pools that surrounded them? Drowned, dismal, drear was the Tour-de-Ville!

A few valiant colonists, Escarras, Douladour, Mainfort, Roquetaillade, and others, did sometimes go, in spite of the pouring rain, to dig their ground and stir their acres, bent on attempting to plant something — which produced most extraordinary results. In the humid heat of that soaked earth celery became in a single night a gigantic tree, and of a hardness! . . Cabbages also took phenomenal development, but altogether in stalks, which became as long as the trunks of palm-trees; as for potatoes and carrots, they had to be renounced. Bézuquet told the truth. Nothing grew, or everything grew too much.

To these multiplied causes of demoralization add the sorrows of ennui, the memory of a native land now far distant, regret for the warm Tarasconese shelter along the old walls of the rampart golden with sunshine, and you will not be surprised that the number of the sick increased alarmingly.

Happily for them, the director of health, Tournatoire, did not believe in the pharmacopœia; and instead of dosing and drenching his patients like Bézuquet, he simply ordered them "a good little garlic soup." And before you could turn round, they were well! never did he miss his stroke. Patients all swollen, without voice or breath, sending for the priest and the notary — in came the garlic

soup, three cloves to a little bowl, three spoonsful of good olive oil with a toast above it, and folks who were past speaking began to say: —

"*Outre!* but that smells good! . ."

Nothing but the smell revived them. They took one plateful, two platesful, and at the third they were up and about, unswelled, voice natural, and playing their game of whist in the salon in the evening. We ought to mention that every one of them was Tarasconesian.

A single patient, but a patient of mark, the very noble Dame des Espazettes, née l'Escudelle de Lambesc, refused Tournatoire's specific. It might do for the riff-raff, garlic soup, but for one descended from the crusaders! . . She would not hear of garlic soup any more than of the marriage of Clorinde to Pascalon. The unfortunate lady was really in a most deplorable state. She — yes, she had it — she had *the disorder*. Understand by that vague term the queer, aqueous, depressing illness that fell upon this colony of meridionals. Those who were victims to it became suddenly very ugly, their eyes oozed, their stomach and legs swelled; this made them all think of the terrible "malady of M. Mauve" in Père Bataillet's legend of Antichrist.

The poor marquise was therefore quite *boudenfle*, — to employ an expression from Pascalon's Memorial, — and every evening when the gentle and despairing secretary came down to town, he found the poor woman in bed, beneath a huge blue cotton umbrella erected behind her pillow, moan-

ing, but obstinately refusing the garlic soup, while the tall and gentle Clorinde busied herself with gruel, and the marquis in a corner philosophically filled his cartridges for a very problematical hunt on the morrow.

In the adjoining cabins the water was dripping on the open umbrellas, children were squalling, squabbles were going on, and the noise of political discussions reached the salon; accompanied always with the beating of the rain upon the windows and the zinc roof, and the gurgling of the water through the gutters.

During all this time Costecalde continued his underhand plotting, during the day in his office as agricultural director, in the evenings "in town" in the common salon with his tools and henchmen Barban and Rugimabaud, who helped him to spread the most dangerous rumours; among them the following: "The garlic will give out. . ."

Conceive the consternation at being forced to think of a coming day when they might be deprived of that saving, healing garlic, the universal panacea, kept in the storerooms of the Government House, the head of which was now accused by Costecalde of monopolizing it.

Excourbaniès — and in what a key! — supported the calumny of the director of agriculture. There is an old Tarasconese proverb which says: "Thieves of Pisa fight one another in the daytime, and steal together at night." This was the case with the double-faced Excourbaniès, who before Tartarin at the Government House talked against

Costecalde, whereas in town at night he yelled in chorus with the worst enemies of the Governor.

Tartarin, whose patience and kindness we all know, was far from being ignorant of these attacks. In the evening, when he smoked his pipe, leaning on his elbows at the open window, listening to the nocturnal noises mingling with the murmur of the Little-Rhone and the rivulets formed by the torrents down the slopes, he could distinguish the distant discussions and the echo of angry voices; he could see through the air, misty with moisture, the moving about of lights behind the windows of the great house; and at the thought that all this trouble was caused by Costecalde, his hand would quiver upon the railing, his eyes spit flames into the darkness — but as, after all, these emotions, joined to the dampness, might cause him to get "the disorder," he controlled himself, closed the window, and went tranquilly to bed.

Things, however, grew more and more envenomed, until at last he decided on a great stroke: he stopped the pay of Costecalde and his two henchmen, and even took from the director his mantle as grandee of the first class, and appointed in his place Beaumevieille, formerly a clockmaker, and not much stronger, perhaps, in agriculture than his predecessor, but undoubtedly an honest man, well seconded by Labranque, lately a manufacturer of oilcloths, and Rebuffat, carriage-maker, who took the places, as sub-directors, of Rugimabaud and Barban.

This decree was posted very early one morning

on the door of the great house, so that Costecalde, coming out, also early, to go to his office, received the information full in the face. It was then that one could plainly see what good reason Tartarin had to act with such vigour.

In the course of an hour or two, a score of malcontents had gathered and were marching to the Government House, armed to the teeth, and shouting: —

"Down with the Governor! . . Death! . . To the Rhone! . . Zou! zou! Resign! Resign!"

Behind the band came Excourbaniès, roaring louder than all the others: "Resign! . . *Fen dé brut!* . . Resign! . ."

Unfortunately, it rained, and in torrents, which obliged them to hold their umbrellas in one hand and their guns in the other. Meantime the Government had taken its measures.

Having crossed the Little-Rhone, the insurgents arrived at the blockhouse, and this is what they saw: —

On the first floor up, Tartarin stood at his wide-open window, with his Winchester rifle, 32 calibre, and behind him his faithful hunters of caps and tin cans; the Marquis des Espazettes in the front line, and all the other fine shots who at three hundred paces and counting four can put you a ball in the gilt centre of a box of sardines. Below, under the roof of the porch, stood Père Bataillet behind his carronade, waiting only for a signal from the Governor to fire.

So formidable and so unexpected was the aspect

of this artillery, with lighted fuse, that the rebels recoiled, and Excourbaniès, by one of those brusque changes of demeanour which came easy to him, began to dance a frantic step, what he called cynically a "*bamboula* of success," under Tartarin's window, roaring out, as long as he had any breath: —

"Long live the Governor! . . Long live the State of Things! . . Let's make a noise! . . Ha! ha! ha!"

Tartarin, from his post above, the Winchester still in his grasp, said in a ringing voice: —

"Return to your homes, all you malcontents. It rains, and I do not wish to keep you exposed to the dampness. To-morrow we shall assemble our faithful people in their comitias, and ask the nation to say if they still desire our services. Until then, let all be calm, or beware — down there!"

They voted the next day, and the present State of Things was re-elected by a crushing majority.

Some days later, as a contrast to all this agitation, took place the baptism of the little Likiriki, the young Papuan princess, daughter of King Negonko, and pupil of the Reverend Père Bataillet, who had completed the conversion begun by Père Vézole, "God be thanked!"

She was really a delicious little monkey, well moulded and so supple and plump, this little yellow-skinned princess, decked in her coral necklaces and a gown of blue stripes, constructed by Mlle. Tournatoire. For godfather the Governor,

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The comp
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"Poor me! p

It was on the
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IV.

Continuation of Pascalon's Memorial.

DECEMBER 4. To-day, second Sunday in Advent, the sacristan Galoffre, inspector of the navy, going, as usual, in the morning to visit the yawl, did not find it. Ring, chain, all was wrenched away; the boat had disappeared!

At first he thought it was some new trick of Negonko and his band, whom we continued to distrust; but in the hole from which the ring had been wrenched there lay, wet with water and mud, a large envelope addressed to the Governor. This envelope contained the P. P. C. cards of Costecalde, Barban, and Rugimabaud. On Barban's card four of the militia-men had written their names and taken leave: Caissarge, Bouillargue, Truphénus, and Roquetaillade.

For several days the yawl had been ready and supplied with provisions in view of a new expedition projected by R. P. Bataillet. The wretches had profited by that piece of luck. They took everything, even the compass, and their guns into the bargain.

And to think that the three first are married men who leave their wives and a brood of children behind them! The wives — one might understand their being abandoned, but the children! . .

The general sentiment in the colony in regard to this event is one of stupor. As long as we had the yawl, the hope remained of reaching the continent from isle to isle. We believed in the possibility of getting succour when needed. Now, it seems as if the bridges were down between us and the rest of the world. Père Bataillet fell into a terrible fury, and called down the fires of heaven on those bandits, thieves, deserters, and, worse still. Excourbaniès, he too went about everywhere, crying out that they ought to be shot, and, as a matter of reprisals, that their wives and children should be put to death.

The Governor, alone, kept his self-possession.

"Do not let us be rash," he said. "After all, they are still Tarasconese. Let us pity them. Think of the dangers they are now encountering. Truphénus is the only one who has any notion of sailing a boat."

Then the beautiful thought came to him of making these abandoned children the wards of the colony. In his heart, I believe he was very glad to be rid of his mortal enemy and his satellites.

In the course of the morning his Excellency dictated to me the following order of the day, which has been posted in town: —

ORDER.

We, Tartarin, Governor of Port-Tarascon and Dependencies, grand cordon of the Order, etc. . . etc. . .

Recommend to the population the utmost calmness.

The guilty will be actively pursued and subjected to the utmost rigour of the law.

The Director of the artillery and navy is in charge of the execution of the present decree.

And in a postscript, replying to certain evil rumours which had been flying about for some time, he made me add: —

The garlic will not give out.

December 6. The Governor's order has had the happiest effect in town. People might, to be sure, have made this reflection: Pursue the guilty? How? Where? With what? — But it is not without reason that we have a proverb among us which says: "Man by speech and bull by the horns." The Tarasconese race is so sensitive to fine phrases that no one even doubted the Governor's order for a moment. A ray of sun between two down-pours has come, just at this very crisis, and all the world is enchanted. On the Tour-de-Ville they are dancing and laughing. Oh! this jolly people, and how truly easy to manage!

December 10. An inexpressible honour has come to me: I am promoted a grandee of the first class. I found the patent this morning under my plate at breakfast. The Governor seemed very pleased to grant me this high distinction; Branquebalme, Beaumevieille, and the Reverend also

seemed as delighted as myself at the new dignity which makes me their equal.

In the evening I went down to see the des Espazettes, by whom the news was already known. The marquis embraced me openly before Clorinde, who blushed with pleasure. The marquise alone seemed indifferent to my new honours. To her this mantle of grandeeship does not cover my origin. What does she want more? . . Of the first class! . . And at my age! . .

December 14. Something so extraordinary is happening at the Government House, so very extraordinary that I scarcely dare confide it to this journal.

The Governor has a sentiment!

And for whom? I give you a thousand guesses. For his godchild, the Princess Likiriki! . .

He, Tartarin, our great Tartarin, who has refused so many fine matches, wishing for no other spouse than Fame, *he*, to fall in love with a monkey! . . a monkey of blood-royal I allow, regenerated by the waters of baptism, but a savage underneath, a lying, greedy, pilfering savage, and so ridiculous in her behaviour and habits! clothes all rags; and up some cocoanut-tree the moment it stops raining, amusing herself with throwing the nuts, hard as stones, on the bald skulls of our excellent elders. She barely missed killing the venerable Miége-ville the other day.

And then, too, the difference in their ages! Tartarin is fully sixty; he is turning gray and

getting corpulent. She, twelve to fifteen at most; the age of the little Fleurance in one of our songs:

L'a prise si jeunette
Ne sait se ceinturer.

And it is this chit, this savage of the isles, who is to be our sovereign lady!

For some time past I have observed certain indications, such as the indulgence of the Governor for the father, that old bandit of a Negonko, whom he often invites to our table in spite of the uncleanness of this hideous gorilla, eating with his fingers, and guzzling brandy till he drops from his chair. Tartarin treats all that as "good jolly gayety," and if the little princess, taking example from her father, behaves in some fantastic way that sends a cold chill down our backs, our kind master smiles, looks round him with a paternal air that seems to ask forgiveness for her, and says: "She is such a child. . ."

Nevertheless, in spite of these symptoms, and others more significant still, I would not believe it; but doubt is no longer possible.

December 18. This morning, at the Council, the Governor spoke to us openly of his intention to marry the little princess. He made a pretext of policy, talked of marriages of convenience and the interests of the colony: Port-Tarascon was isolated; alone in the Ocean, without alliances. By marrying the daughter of a Papuan king he secured to us an army and a fleet.

No one in the Council made any objection. Excourbanièrs was the first to spring up, quivering with enthusiasm. "Bravo! . . Admirable! . . When is the wedding? . . Ha! ha! ha! . ." And this evening, in town, who knows what vile things he will say?

Cicéron Branquebalme, as usual, drew up his implacable arguments in a for and against: "if on the one hand the colony . . . it is proper to say on the other hand . . . whereas . . . and inasmuch . . . *verum enim vero* . . ." and ended by being of the Governor's opinion.

Beaumevieille and Tournatoire followed in his steps, and as for Père Bataillet, he seemed to be behind the scenes and said nothing. The comical part was the hypocritical face of every one of us, pretending to believe in the colonial interests invoked by Tartarin in the midst of a profound approving silence.

But suddenly his kind eyes moistened with gay tears, and he said to us very softly: —

"And then, you see, friends, that is not all. . . I . . . I love her, the little thing."

It was so simple, so touching, that we all had our hearts turned round: "Hey! Monsieur le Gouverneur! yes, do as you like!" and we crowded round him and pressed his hands.

December 20. The Governor's project is much discussed in town, but less severely judged than I should have thought it would be. The men talked gayly about it, in Tarasconese fashion, that is,

with a touch of malice which we always infuse into things of love in our part of the world. The women in general were more hostile; the group around Mlle. Tournatoire more particularly. If he wanted to marry, why not choose among the nation? Many in speaking thus thought of themselves or their daughters. Excourbanièss, who went into town that evening, took the side of the ladies and pointed out the evils of the marriage: that ill-behaved father-in-law, drunken and a cannibal; and the bride herself, having, according to all accounts, eaten the Tarasconese. Tartarin ought to have reflected on these things.

As I listened to this traitor, I felt my anger rise, and I left the salon hastily, so fearful was I of sending him a splash in the face. Hot blood we have in Tarascon, *outre!*

From there I went to the des Espazettes. The marquise is very feeble, always in bed, poor woman! and still rejecting Tournatoire's garlic soup. She said to me, as soon as she saw me, "Well, Monsieur le chambellan, are there to be ladies of honour to our new queen?" She meant this in ridicule; but suddenly the idea occurred to me that there might be something in it to help us. Maid of honour, or lady of the palace! in which case Clorinde must live at the Government House, and we could see each other at all hours. . . Could such happiness be possible? . .

When I returned, the Governor had just gone to bed; but I could not wait till the morrow before speaking to him of my project, which he approved

as good policy. Stayed late beside his bed, talking with him of his love and mine.

December 25. Last night, Christmas Eve, the Administration, the dignitaries, and the whole colony assembled in the great salon, and then and there we celebrated our beautiful Provençal festival five thousand leagues from home. Père Bataillet said midnight mass, and then we laid the *cache-feu*. This is a log of wood which the oldest person present carries round the room and throws upon the fire, sprinkling it with white wine.

The Princess Likiriki was there, much amused by the ceremony, the nougat, the boiled eggs, the sugarplums, and other local dainties with which the ingenious pastry-cook Bouffartigue had decked the table. We sang that old Christmas carol: —

> Behold the Eastern kings
> With eyes all straining;
> The Infant Jesus weeps;
> The kings, they dare not enter.

The songs, the cakes, the great fire, around which we made a circle, all these things recalled to us our native land, in spite of the dripping of the rain upon the roof and the umbrellas open in the salon on account of the fissures.

Suddenly Père Bataillet struck up, on the harmonium, that beautiful song by Frédéric Mistral, "Jean of Tarascon taken by corsairs," the history

of a Tarasconese who fell into the hands of the Turks, adopted the turban without shame, and was about to marry the daughter of a pacha when he heard on the shore the sailors of a Tarasconese brig singing a song in the Provençal language. Then: —

"As the water bubbled beneath the oar — a flood of tears — melted his hardened heart — the homeless thought of home — in wild despair — at being with the Turks."

At this verse, beginning "the water bubbled beneath the oar," a sob shook every one of us. The Governor himself drank tears, his head thrown back, so that all we saw was the grand cordon of the Order, heaving and falling on that athletic breast of his. It may be that everything will now be changed — and all because of a song of that great Mistral.

December 29. To-day, at ten o'clock in the morning, the marriage of his Excellency Tartarin, Governor of Port-Tarascon, to the Princess-Royal Negonko took place.

The contract was signed by: his Majesty Negonko (who made a cross for signature), the Directors, and all the great dignitaries of the colony, after which the marriage mass was said in the great salon. A very simple ceremony, very dignified, all the militia under arms, everybody in full dress: Negonko alone a spot upon the occasion; his behaviour as king and father being deplorable.

Nothing to be said about the princess, very pretty in her white gown and coral ornaments.

In the evening a great fête, double ration of provisions, discharge of cannon, salvos from the tin-box hunters, vivats, songs, universal joy.

And it rained. . . It rains . . . in torrents!

V.

Apparition of the Duc de Mons. The island bombarded. It was not the Duc de Mons. "Lower the flag, coquin de sort!" Twelve hours given the Tarasconese to evacuate the island without boats. At Tartarin's table all present swear to follow their Governor into captivity.

"*Vé! vé!* . . A ship! . . A ship in the roadstead!" At this cry, shouted one morning by the militia-man Berdoulat while looking for tortoise-eggs in a driving rain, the heads of all the colonists of Port-Tarascon appeared at the openings of their ark in the mud, and a thousand voices echoed through windows and doors the cry of Berdoulat: "A ship! *vé! vé!* a ship!" Skipping, twirling, like an English pantomime, the crowd rushed wildly to the shore, where it filled the air with a bellow as of walruses.

The Governor, notified, hastened down, buttoning his coat as he came, and beaming beneath the streaming sky upon his people under umbrellas.

"Well, well, my children, did I not tell you he would come? . . This is the duke. . ."

"The duke?"

"Who else should it be? Hey! yes, of course; our noble Duc de Mons, who comes to revictual his colony, to bring us arms, implements, and those

muscles of proletaries that I have never ceased to ask of him."

You should have seen at that moment the scared faces of the men who had been most indignant against the "dirty Belgian," for all had not the impudence of Excourbaniès, who was twirling on the shore and shouting, "Long live the Duc de Mons! . . Ha! ha! ha! . . Long live our saviour! . ."

During this time a large steamship, high out of water, very imposing, advanced into the roadstead. She whistled, belched her steam, let go her anchor noisily but far from the shore, on account of the coral reefs, and lay there motionless and silent in the falling rain.

The colonists began to be surprised at the little eagerness shown by those on board in replying to their acclamations and to their signals with umbrellas and waving hats. He seemed to them cold, that noble duke.

"*Différemment*, he may not feel sure it is us."

"Or else he is angry at the harm we have said of him."

"Harm? I never said any at all."

"Nor I, most assuredly."

"Nor I, either."

Tartarin, in the midst of the confusion, did not lose his head. He gave orders to raise the flag on the roof of the Government House, and to salute the colours with cannon.

The salute was given; the Tarasconese colours waved in the breeze.

At the same instant a frightful detonation filled the roadstead and wrapped the ship in a dense cloud of smoke, while a species of black bird, passing over the heads of the colonists with a hoarse scream, fell upon the roof of the storehouse and ripped it off.

At first there was a moment of stupor. "But they are fi . . . fi . . . ring at us!" stuttered Pascalon.

The next instant, following the example of the Governor, the whole colony lay flat on their stomachs.

"Then it can't be the duke," said Tartarin in a low voice to Cicéron Branquebalme, who, sunk in the mud beside him, felt called upon to open one of his searching discussions, "if on the one hand it was supposable . . . on the other hand it might be said . . ."

The arrival of another shell interrupted his argument.

This time, Père Bataillet bounded up and, in a furious voice, called to the sacristan Galoffre, his keeper of artillery, shouting out that they two, at any rate, would reply with the carronade.

"I forbid you!" cried Tartarin. "What imprudence! Hold him, you others . . . prevent him. . ."

Torquebiau and Galoffre caught the Reverend each by an arm, and forced him to lie down flat like the rest at the very moment when a third shot came from the ship, directed, as before, to the flag of the colony. Visibly the attack was made on the national colours.

Tartarin saw this; he also comprehended that if the flag disappeared the shells would cease to rain, and with all the force of his lungs he roared: "Lower the flag, *coquin de sort!*"

Instantly everybody shouted all around him: "Lower the flag! Come, lower the flag!"

But nobody lowered it, neither colonists nor soldiery caring to climb up there for such a dangerous piece of work; and again it was the Alric girl who devoted herself. She scaled the roof and furled that luckless banner. Then, and not till then, the vessel ceased firing.

A few moments later, two boats, full of soldiers whose arms were seen glittering in the distance, put off from the ship and made for the shore with the rhythm of the oars of a man-o'-war's crew. As they came nearer, the English colours could be made out trailing low in the foamy wake of each boat.

The distance was great, and Tartarin had time to pick himself up and efface the mud that clung to his garments, and even to send for his grand cordon of the Order, which he hastily put on above his every-day coat of serpent-green. He therefore had sufficiently the air of a Governor when the boats touched land.

From the first, a haughty English officer, in a cocked hat, sprang ashore; behind him ranged the sailors, bearing on their caps the word TOMAHAWK.

Tartarin, very dignified, with his pomposity of grand occasions, awaited the officer, having on

his right Père Bataillet, on his left Branquebalme. As for Excourbaniès, instead of staying with them, he had rushed to meet the Englishmen, prepared to dance before the victor a frantic *bamboula.*

But the officer of Her Gracious Majesty, paying no heed to such buffoonery, marched straight to Tartarin, and asked in English: —

"What nation are you?"

"Tarasconese."

The officer opened eyes like saucers at the name of a people he had never seen on any naval map, and he asked, more insolently still: —

"What are you doing on this island? By what right are you here?"

Branquebalme, as requested, translated the inquiry to Tartarin, who ordered: —

"Reply that the island is ours, Cicéron; that it was ceded to us by King Negonko, and that we have the treaty in legal form."

Branquebalme was not required to continue the office of interpreter. The Englishman turned to the Governor, and said in excellent French: —

"Negonko? Don't know him... There is no King Negonko."

Tartarin gave orders to find his father-in-law and bring him forward.

Meanwhile he proposed to the English officer to come up to the Government House, where he would show him the documents.

The officer accepted, and followed him, leaving a company of marines to guard the boats, drawn up in line, with fixed bayonets. And such bayo-

nets! glittering, oh! and sharp! sharp enough to make your flesh creep.

"Be calm, my children, be calm!" murmured Tartarin, as he walked along.

Very useless advice, except to Père Bataillet, who continued to foam. But they kept an eye on him: "If you don't keep quiet, my Reverend, I 'll tie you," said Excourbaniès, wild with terror.

During this time they were seeking Negonko and calling him everywhere, in vain. A militia-man finally discovered him on the floor of the storehouse, snoring between two hogsheads, drunk with garlic, lamp oil, and alcohol, of which he had absorbed nearly all the supply. They took him in this state, greasy and evil-smelling, before the Governor, but not a word could be got out of him.

Then Tartarin read the treaty aloud, showed the cross in signature of his Majesty, the seal of the Government, and the signatures of all the great dignitaries of the colony. This authentic document proved the rights of the Tarasconese to the island, or nothing could prove them.

The officer shrugged his shoulders: —

"That savage is simply a pickpocket, monsieur. . . He has sold you what did not belong to him. This island has long been a British possession."

In face of that declaration, to which the cannons of the "Tomahawk" and the bayonets of the marines gave considerable emphasis, Tartarin felt all discussion useless, and he contented himself

with making a terrible scene to his unworthy father-in-law.

"Old scoundrel! . . Why did you tell us the island was yours? . . Why did you sell it? . . Are not you ashamed to have cheated honest men? . ."

Negonko was mute, besotted, his limited intelligence quite volatilized in the fumes of the garlic and alcohol.

"Carry him away! . ." said Tartarin to the militiamen who had brought him; and turning to the British officer, who stood by, stiff, impassible, during this family scene, —

"In any case, monsieur," he said, "my good faith is beyond discussion."

"The English courts will decide as to that," said the other, in his top-lofty way. "From this moment you are my prisoner. As for the inhabitants, I give them twenty-four hours to evacuate the island; if not, they will be shot."

"*Outre!* . . Shot!" exclaimed Tartarin. "In the first place, how do you expect them to evacuate an island when we have n't any boats? Unless, indeed, they should swim away. . ."

The Englishman having been brought to see reason on this point, he consented to take the colonists on the "Tomahawk" as far as Gibraltar, on condition that all arms should be surrendered, including hunting-knives, revolvers, and the famous Winchester of calibre 32. After which he returned to lunch on his frigate, leaving a squad of men to guard the Governor.

It was also the breakfast-hour of the Government, and after vainly hunting for the princess in all the neighbouring cocoanut and palm-trees, they sat down to table, leaving her place vacant. Every one was so excited that Père Bataillet forgot the Benedicite.

They had been eating some time in silence, their noses in their plates, when suddenly Pascalon rose up and, lifting his glass, said: —

"Messieurs, our Gov. . . Governor is a p . . . p . . . prisoner of war. Let us swear to follow him into ca . . . ca . . . cap —"

Not waiting for the end, every one jumped up, glass extended, and cried enthusiastically: —

"Of course! of course!"

"*Feu de Dieu!* follow him? yes, indeed!"

"I should think so! . . To the scaffold! . ."

"Ha! ha! ha! . . Long live Tartarin!" yelled Excourbaniès.

One hour later, they had all, with the exception of Pascalon, abandoned the Governor, all, even the little Likiriki, miraculously found on the roof of the Government House. She had flown there on the first sound of the cannonade, without being aware that her risks were much greater in that position. So terrified was she that her ladies of honour could not induce her to come down until they showed her a box of sardines, just as you would offer a lump of sugar to a cockatoo escaped from its cage.

"My dear child," Tartarin said to her in solemn tones, when they brought her back to him, "I am

a prisoner of war. Which would you prefer? To come with me, or stay on the island? I think the English will let you stay here, but in that case you will never see me again."

Without hesitation, and looking straight at him, she replied in her clear, childish warble: —

"Me stay isle, al'ays."

"Very well. You are free," said Tartarin, resigned; but the poor man's heart was in bits. That evening, in the solitude of the Government House, abandoned by his wife, his dignitaries, having no one near him but Pascalon, he dreamed for a long time at the open window.

Before him winked the lights of "the town;" the sound of angry voices could be heard, also the songs of the British camped upon the shore, and the dashing of the Little-Rhone, swollen by the rains.

Tartarin closed his window at last with a heavy sigh, and as he put on his nightcap — a vast silk handkerchief with yellow spots in which he was wont to tie up his head — he said to his secretary: —

"When the others deserted me, I was not much surprised or grieved . . . but the little one! . . truly, I did think she cared for me. . ."

The good Pascalon tried to comfort him. After all, that savage princess would certainly have been a queer bit of baggage to take back to Tarascon; for they were really going back to Tarascon — and when Tartarin returned to his former existence a Papuan wife might have been awkward, embarrass-

ing . . . "Don't you remember, my dear master, when you came back from Algeria how troublesome you found your c . . . ca . . . camel? . ."

But here Pascalon interrupted himself and turned red all over. What an idea, to go and talk of a camel, apropos of a princess of the blood-royal! To repair the irreverence of that comparison, he made Tartarin observe the analogy of his situation with that of Napoleon, a prisoner of the British and abandoned by Maria Louisa.

"True," said Tartarin, very proud of the similitude. And the identity of their two destinies, his and the great Napoleon's, caused him to pass a very excellent night.

The next day Port-Tarascon was evacuated, to the great joy of the colonists. Their lost money, their illusory acres, the great banking stroke of the "dirty Belgian" by which they had been victimized — all now seemed to them as nothing compared to the comfort they felt in getting out of that swamp. They were embarked first, in order to avoid any unpleasantness with the State of Things, whom they now made responsible for all their misfortunes. While they were being taken to the boats, Tartarin showed himself at his window, but he soon retired before the howls that greeted him and the threatening fists that were shaken in his face.

Undoubtedly on a bright sunny day the Tarasconese would have been more merciful, but the embarkation was made in torrential rain; the unfortunates paddled through the mire, carrying

away kilos of that cursèd soil on the soles of their boots; and cotton umbrellas were no protection at all to the quantities of little packages they carried in their hands.

When all the colonists had left the island, it was Tartarin's turn to go. Since early morning Pascalon had been astir, preparing everything, and tying up in packages the archives of the colony. At the last moment an idea — one of genius — came to him. He asked Tartarin if he ought not to wear on going on board his mantle as grandee of the first class.

"Yes, put it on; it will serve to impress them," replied the Governor; he himself wore the grand cordon of the Order.

Below, he heard the rattle of the guns of his escort, and the stern voice of the officer, calling out to him: —

"Monsieur Tartarin! Come, Monsieur le Gouverneur!"

Before departing, Tartarin cast a last look about him, on that house where he had loved, where he had suffered and borne all the horrors of power and passion. Observing at that moment that the director of the secretariat was endeavouring to hide something under his mantle, he asked what it was, and demanded to see it, so that Pascalon was obliged to acknowledge to his kind master the existence of the Memorial.

"Well, well, continue it, my child," said Tartarin, gently, pinching his ear, as Napoleon did to his grenadiers. "You shall be my little Las Cases."

sort! ... and bc

THIRD BOOK.

I.

The reception the English gave to Tartarin on board the "Tomahawk." Last farewells to the island of Port-Tarascon. Conversation of the Governor on the poop with his little Las Cases. Costecalde is found. The lady of the commodore. Tartarin shoots his first whale.

THE dignity of Tartarin's bearing, as he mounted the deck of the "Tomahawk," impressed the English very much; above all, were they struck by the grand ribbon of the Order, pink, La Tarasque embroidered upon it, with which the Governor had scarfed himself as if with some masonic symbol, and also by the black and red mantle of a grandee of the first class which enveloped Pascalon from head to foot.

The British have, above everything else, a respect for hierarchy, for functionalism; also for maboulism (from *maboul*, in the Arabic language, meaning an innocent, a noodle).

Tartarin was received at the gangway of the frigate by the officer on duty, and conducted into one of the chief cabins with the utmost courtesy. Pascalon followed him, and was fully rewarded for his devotion, for they gave him a cabin next to that of

his Governor, instead of sending him between decks with the other Tarasconese, crowded down there like a troop of miserable emigrants, pell-mell, among whom were the former dignitaries of the isle, well punished now for their weakness and treachery.

Between Tartarin's cabin and that of his faithful secretary was a little salon, furnished with divans, stands of arms, a few exotic plants, and a dining-room where two blocks of ice on corner buffets maintained a constant coolness. A steward and two or three attendants were attached to the person of his Excellency, who accepted this honour with fine composure, and to every new attention answered "Parfaite*main*," in the tone of a sovereign accustomed to all respect and every sort of solicitude.

At the moment of weighing anchor Tartarin went up on deck, in spite of the rain, to bid a last farewell to his island. He saw it dimly through the mist, yet sufficiently distinct to show him King Negonko and his bandits already pillaging the town and the Government House, and dancing a mad fandango on the shore. All the catechumens of Père Bataillet, as soon as the missionary and the gendarmes were safely off, returned to their good old instincts of nature. Pascalon even thought he saw amid the dancers the graceful silhouette of Likiriki; but he said nothing, for fear of afflicting his kind master, who seemed, however, entirely indifferent about it all.

Very calm, his hands behind his back in a famed

historic attitude, the Tarasconese hero gazed before him, yet seeing nothing; his thoughts more and more preoccupied by analogies of his destiny with that of Napoleon, — astonished to discover between that great man and himself so many points of resemblance, even in their common weaknesses, which he acknowledged very simply.

"Napoleon," he said to his little Las Cases, "had terrible fits of anger, and I the same, especially in my youth. . . For instance, that time, in the Café de la Comédie, disputing with Costecalde, when I knocked his cup and mine into atoms with a blow of my fist . . ."

"Bonaparte at Léoben! . ." remarked Pascalon, timidly.

"True, my child," said Tartarin, with his kind smile.

But — on further reflection — it was through their imagination, their fiery imagination, that the Emperor and he most resembled each other. In Napoleon it was grandiose, overflowing; witness that campaign in Egypt, his rides across the desert on a camel — camel! another striking similitude — his Russian campaign, his dream of the conquest of India. . . And he, Tartarin, was not his whole existence a fabulous dream? . . the lions, the Nihilists, the Jungfrau, the government of that island five thousand leagues from France? Certainly he did not contest the superiority of the Emperor in certain points of view; but he, at least, he himself had never shed blood, rivers of blood! nor terrified the world like the other. . .

The island was disappearing in the distance; but Tartarin, leaning on the bulwarks, continued to talk aloud for the gallery, for the sailors who were brushing up the cinders that fell upon the deck, for the officers of the watch who approached him. After a while this grew tiresome. Pascalon asked his permission to go forward and join the Tarasconese (of whom they could see a few miserable groups standing about in the rain) in order, he said, to discover what they thought of the Governor, but really in the hope of slipping in a word of consolation and encouragement to his dear Clorinde.

When he returned, an hour later, he found Tartarin installed at his ease on the divan of the little salon, in his flannel drawers with the foulard round his head, as if at home in Tarascon, employed in smoking a pipe before a delicious sherry-cobbler. In adorable good-humour the master asked: —

"Well, what do they say of me, those good people?"

Pascalon did not conceal that he had found them "up in arms." Crowded between decks like cattle, ill-fed, roughly treated, they were making the Governor responsible for all their misfortunes. But Tartarin shrugged his shoulders; he knew his own people, as you can well imagine! All that would dry up on the first sunny morning.

"Certainly they are not malignant in themselves," replied Pascalon; "it is that vile beggar Costecalde who stirs them up."

"Costecalde! how is that?.. What do you mean about Costecalde?"

Tartarin was troubled at hearing that fatal name.

Pascalon explained how their enemy, met and rescued at sea by the "Tomahawk" from a boat in which he was dying of hunger and thirst, had treacherously told of the presence of a Provençal colony on British territory, and had actually guided the frigate to the roadstead of Port-Tarascon.

The eyes of the Governor flashed fire: —

"Ah! the villain!.. the pirate!.."

But he calmed himself on hearing the tale told by Pascalon of the dreadful adventures of the former director and his henchmen in the yawl.

Truphénus drowned!.. The three other militiamen, on going ashore for water, captured by the anthropophagi!.. Barban found dead of inanition in the bottom of the boat!.. As for Rugimabaud, a shark had eaten him.

"*Ah vaï!* a shark!.. better say that infamous Costecalde."

"But the extraordinary part of it is, Monsieur le Gou ... Gouverneur, that Costecalde declares he met on the open seas, in the midst of a tempest of thunder and lightning ... guess whom?.."

"How the devil do you expect me to guess?"

"La Tarasque ... *la mère-grand!*"

"What a falsehood!.."

But, after all, who knows?.. The "Tutu-panpan" might have been wrecked; or, possibly, a

storm had wrenched La Tarasque from her lashings on the deck. . .

At this moment the steward came to present the bill of fare to the Governor, who sat down a few moments later to an excellent champagne dinner, at which figured splendid slices of salmon, pink roast-beef cooked to a turn, and for dessert the most toothsome of puddings. Tartarin found everything so good that he sent a large portion to Père Bataillet and Branquebalme; as for Pascalon, he constructed certain sandwiches of salmon, which he put aside. Is it necessary to say for whom, *pécaïre!*

On the second day of the voyage, the island being no longer in sight, and as if it had been an isolated reservoir of fogs and rain in the midst of the archipelago, the fine weather reappeared. Every morning after breakfast, Tartarin went on deck and installed himself in precisely the same place to talk to Pascalon. Napoleon, on board the "Northumberland," had his favourite post, leaning on that cannon which was ever after called "the cannon of the Emperor."

Did the great Tarasconese remember this? Was the coincidence intentional? Perhaps; but if so, it ought in no way to diminish the fact in our eyes. Did not Napoleon, when delivering himself to England, think of Themistocles, and without concealing that he did so? "I come, like Themistocles. . ." And who knows whether Themistocles himself when he came to the hearth of the Persian . . . ? Humanity is so old, so clogged, so

replete, it is always stepping in the tracks of some one else. . .

In other respects the details given by Tartarin to his little Las Cases had nothing in common with Napoleon's existence, and were altogether personal to himself, Tartarin of Tarascon. They were about his youth on the Tour-de-Ville, his precocious adventures on returning from the club at night. While still a child, he had loved weapons, and the hunting of wild beasts; but always with that Latin good sense which never abandoned him in his wildest pranks, that inward voice which said to him: "Go home early . . . don't take cold."

Once, during an excursion to the Pont du Gard, now distant in his memory, a gypsy, an old gitana, said to him, after looking at the lines in his hand: "Some day you will be king." Fancy how that horoscope made every one laugh! And yet it was realized . . .

Here the great man interrupted himself: —

"I toss you these little things," he said, "like stray balls, just as they come to me; but I think they may be useful to your Memorial. . ."

"Most assuredly!" replied Pascalon, who drank in the words of his hero, while a dozen little middies grouped around Tartarin listened to his tales open-mouthed.

But the most attentive auditor of all was the wife of the commodore, a young, languishing, delicate creole, stretched near by on her bamboo chair, with negligent postures, the glowing pallor of a magnolia, and great black eyes, soft, deep, pen-

sive... She, yes indeed, she fairly drank in Tartarin's stories. Quite proud of seeing his master so attentively listened to, Pascalon, seeking to increase his fame, urged him to tell of his lion-hunts, his ascension of the Jungfrau, his defence of Pampérigouste. And the hero, always good-natured, lent a hand to this innocent trickery, gave himself out, let himself be read like a book, but a book with pictures, illustrated by his own expressive Tarasconese pantomime and the loud pan! pan! of his hunting adventures.

The chilly creole, well wrapped up in her bamboo chair, quivered at each burst of the hero's voice, and her emotions were made visible in so refined a way that a fleeting rose-tint mounted to her delicate water-colour cheek. When the husband, the commodore, a sort of Sir Hudson Lowe with an ill-tempered weasel's snout, came on deck to take her down, she would say: "No, no... not yet..." with a sidelong glance at Tarascon's great man, who was not without remarking it, and would raise his voice for her benefit with something nobler, as it were, in his accent and attitude.

Sometimes, when they returned to their cabin after one of these sessions, he would question Pascalon, with a negligent air: —

"What did the lady of the commodore say to you? I thought it was something about me, hey?"

"Just so, ma-a-aster. She told me she had heard a great deal of you."

"I am not surprised," said Tartarin, simply; "I am popular in England."

Still another analogy with Napoleon.

One morning, having gone rather early on deck, he was much surprised not to find his creole already there, as usual. No doubt the rough weather on that particular day, and the spray dashing over the bows, had kept her below, she, so delicate in health, so nervously impressionable! Even the deck and the crew seemed affected by the tumult of the sea.

Suddenly a whale was sighted, an event quite rare in those latitudes. Apparently it had no vent-holes at the top of its head and did not spout; by which some of the sailors assumed to know it was a female; others declared it was a whale of a singular species. They could not agree. As the creature remained in the path of the frigate and did not attempt to move away, a delegation from the cockpit requested permission of the commodore to capture her. He refused, surly dog that he was, under pretext that he had no time to lose, but he gave orders to fire a few muskets at the fish.

The monster was then about two hundred and fifty to three hundred yards away, sometimes appearing, sometimes disappearing, according to the movement of the water, which was choppy and tumbling, making it difficult to aim. After a few shots, the result of which was announced by the look-out in the main-top, the whale had evidently not been touched, for she contined to gambol on

the surface of the water, while everybody watched her, even the Tarasconese, who were shivering forward, sprayed, drenched, and much more exposed to the shipping of seas than the gentlemen aft.

Standing among the young officers who were trying their prowess, Tartarin judged their shots: "Too high! . . too far! . . too short! . . "

"Suppose you f-fire, ma-aster," bleated Pascalon.

Instantly, with the lively impulse of youth, a midshipman turned to Tartarin.

"Will you, Monsieur le Gouverneur?" he said, offering his carbine; and it was something to see, the way in which Tartarin took the weapon, weighed it in his hand, and brought it to his shoulder; while Pascalon, timid but proud, asked: —

"How many do you count for a whale?"

"I have not often fired on such game as this," replied the hero, "but I should say ten."

He took aim, counted ten, fired, and returned the carbine to its owner.

"I think she got it," said the midshipman.

"Hurrah! . . " shouted the sailors.

"I thought so!" said Tartarin, modestly.

But at this moment awful howls rent the air, an uproar so violent that the commodore ran up, expecting nothing less than an attack upon his frigate by a band of pirates. The Tarasconese forward were bounding, gesticulating, vociferating all together in chorus with the noise of the wind and waves: —

"La Tarasque! . . He has fired on La Tarasque! He has shot *la mère-grand!* . . "

"*Outre!* what's that they say?" cried Tartarin, turning pale.

Ten yards distant from the ship, La Tarasque of Tarascon, that monstrous idol, now reared above the glaucous waves her scaly back, her chimerical head with its ferocious and vermilion grin and its bloody eyes. Made of very hard wood, solidly put together, she had held her own upon the waves since the day (as was known later) when she was washed from Scrapouchinat's deck by a billow. She had rolled at the will of all maritime currents, shiny, algous, barnacled, but not damaged; escaping dreadful typhoons; intact, indestructible! And her first, her only wound, was that inflicted on her by Tartarin of Tarascon. . .

Oh! from him — to Her! . .

The scar, all fresh, could now be seen in the centre of the forehead of the poor *mère-grand!*

An English officer exclaimed: —

"Look there, Lieutenant Shipp, what sort of queer beast is that?"

"It is La Tarasque, young man," said Tartarin, solemnly; "the ancestress, the venerable grandmother of all good Tarasconese people."

The officer looked bewildered; and he had reason to be, on learning that that fantastic monster was the grandmother of the strange black hirsute populace taken from a savage island five thousand leagues out at sea.

Tartarin had respectfully taken off his hat as he

spoke; but already the *mère-grand* was afar off, borne on the currents of the Pacific, where she is still wandering, an unsubmersionable derelict, which the tales of travellers revive, now here, now there, to the terror of all whalers under the name of the sea-serpent, or the giant octopus.

As long as they could see her, the hero followed her with his eyes without uttering a word. When she was nothing more than a small black spot on the whitening horizon, he murmured in a feeble voice: —

"Pascalon, I say it to you, that shot will bring me harm."

And for all the rest of the day he continued thoughtful, full of remorse and pious horror.

II.

A dinner with the commodore. Tartarin shows the steps of the farandole. Definition of the Tarasconese by Lieutenant Shipp. In sight of Gibraltar. The vengeance of La Tarasque.

THEY had sailed for more than a week, and were nearing the perfumed shores of India beneath the same milky sky, the same smooth, oily sea as on the outward passage, and Tartarin in his drawers on a fine, clear, warm afternoon was taking a siesta in his chamber, his good big head tied up in his spotted foulard, the ends of which, too long, stood up like the peaceful ears of a ruminating animal, when, all of a sudden, Pascalon precipitated himself into the cabin.

"*Hein!* . . What is it? What 's the matter?" cried the great man, pulling off his coif, for he did not like to be seen in it.

Pascalon answered, choking, his eyes round, and stammering more than ever: —

"I think she 's in for it."

"She! Who? La Tarasque? *Coquin de sort!* I know it only too well."

"No," said Pascalon, lower than a whisper, "the lady of the commodore."

"*Pécaïre!* poor thing! another! . . But what makes you think that?"

For all answer, Pascalon held out a printed card on which Commodore Lord and Lady William Plantagenet requested the presence of his Excellency Governor Tartarin and M. Pascalon, director of the secretariat, at dinner that very evening.

"Oh! woman . . . woman! . . " cried Tartarin, for evidently this invitation came from the wife of the commodore; it could not have come from the husband, who had certainly no mind for invitations. Then, interrogating himself with gravity: "Ought I to accept, *pas mouain?* . . My situation as prisoner of war . . ."

Pascalon, who knew his authors, recalled that on board the "Northumberland" Napoleon dined at the admiral's table.

"That decides me," said the Governor at once.

"Only," added Pascalon, "the Emperor always retired with the ladies when the wine was brought."

"Exactly; that decides me still further. Reply, in the third person, that we accept."

"Dress-coat, I suppose, ma-aster?"

"Certainly."

Pascalon would fain have put on his mantle of the first class, but the master was not of his opinion. He himself did not intend to wear the ribbon of the Order.

"It is not the Governor they invite," he said to his secretary, "it is Tartarin; there's a distinction."

That devil of a man understood everything.

The dinner was really princely, served in a great

dining-saloon, very glittering, richly furnished in maple and arbor-vitæ, the partitions and panels done in that charming English cabinet-work, so delicate, so minute, the slender foliage of which looks like toy-work.

Tartarin was seated in the place of honor to the right of Lady William. There were few guests, — no one, in fact, but Lieutenant Shipp and the surgeon of the frigate, who both spoke French. A servant in nankeen livery, stiff and solemn, stood behind each chair. Nothing more luxurious than the wines, the massive silver plate with the arms of the Plantagenets, and in the centre of the table a magnificent epergne filled with the rarest orchids.

Pascalon, much intimidated by this luxury, stammered the more because it always happened that he had his mouth full at the moment when any one spoke to him. He admired the tranquil ease of Tartarin in presence of that commodore with the lips of a tiger-cat and green eyes striped with blood under the lashes of an albino. But Tartarin, hunter of higher game, cared little for tiger-cats, and paid his court to Lady William with as much grace and ardour as if the commodore had been a hundred leagues off. Milady, on her side, did not conceal her sympathy for the hero, and looked at him with tender glances — very extraordinary glances.

"Unhappy pair! the husband will see all!" Pascalon kept thinking.

Not at all; the husband saw nothing, and even seemed himself to take pleasure in the narratives

which the great Tarasconese was relating. At Lady William's request, Tartarin told the history of La Tarasque and Saint Martha with her blue ribbon; he spoke of his people, the Tarasconese race, its traditions, its exodus; then he explained his government, his projects, his reforms, the new code of laws he was preparing, — a code, by the by, which he had never before mentioned, even to Pascalon; but do we ever know what secretly rolls in those vast brains of the leaders of a people?

He was profound . . . he was gay . . . he sang the airs of his native land: Jean de Tarascon captured by corsairs, and his loves with the Sultan's daughter. Leaning towards Lady William, in vibrant, ardent half-tones he hummed the stanza:

> To him, with laurel crowned, the daughter of the king,
> Lovely, and brilliant, and in love with him,
> Said . . . etc.

The languid creole, usually so pale, turned rosy. Then, the song being ended, she wished to know what the farandole was like, that dance about which the Tarasconese were always talking.

"Oh, *mon Dieu!* it is very simple; I 'll show you," said the good Tartarin.

Wishing to produce the effect entirely alone, he turned to his secretary, and said: —

"Stay where you are, Pascalon."

Then he rose, and danced the step, timing it to the air of the farandole: *Ra-pa-ta-plan, pa-ta-tin, pa-ta-pan. . .* Unluckily the ship gave a lurch at

that moment and he fell; but he picked himself up with perfect good-humour, and was the first to laugh at his mishap.

In spite of deportment and discipline, the whole table clapped the Governor and thought him delicious.

Presently the wines appeared. Lady William at once rose to leave the dining-room, and Tartarin, hastily throwing down his napkin, retired also, without bowing, without excusing himself, conforming strictly to the Napoleonic legend. The English looked at each other in astonishment, and exchanged a few words in a low tone.

"His Excellency never drinks wine after dinner," said Pascalon, feeling that he ought to explain the departure of his good master and do the talking in his stead. Accordingly, he tarasconaded very prettily himself, and while holding his own with the British in drinking claret, he enlivened and stirred them up with the joyous vim of his gay pantomime. After which, suspecting that Tartarin had gone on deck to join Lady William, he insidiously offered himself, when they rose from table, for a game of chess with the commodore, a great lover of that pastime.

The other guests at the dinner were talking and smoking around them, and at one moment when Lieutenant Shipp had whispered in the doctor's ear something that made him laugh out loud, the commodore looked up: —

"What did he say, that Shipp?" he inquired. The lieutenant repeated his remark, and they all

laughed more than ever, without Pascalon being able to make out what was meant.

On deck, during this time, leaning on the back of Lady William's chair, Tartarin, in the fragrance of the dying breeze and the dazzling reflections of the setting sun hanging to the cordage like bunches of currants — Tartarin was relating his loves with the Princess Likiriki and their agonizing separation. He knew that women love to comfort; that the surest way to succeed with all of them is to wear your heart-griefs in a sling visibly. . . Oh! the scene of those farewells between the little princess and himself murmured in milady's ear in the gathering mystery of the twilight! Whoso has not heard that, has heard nothing.

I will not affirm to you that the narrative was strictly correct, that the scene was not a trifle touched up; but, in any case, it was what he would have liked it to be — a passionate, ardent Likiriki, a poor princess, torn between her family feelings and her conjugal love, clinging to the hero with despairing little hands: "Take me! take me!" And he, with aching heart, repulsing her, tearing himself from her embraces: "No, no, my child; it must be so. Remain with your father, he has naught but you. . ."

In relating these things the hero shed tears, real tears, and it seemed to him that the beautiful creole eyes raised to his were moistened by his tale, while the sun slowly sinking in the sea left a soft horizon behind it, bathed in violet mist.

Suddenly the shadows deepened, and the voice

"Tartarin was relating his loves with the Princess Likiriki and their agonizing separation"

of the commodore, sharp and glacial, broke the charm: —

"It is late, and too chilly for you, my dear: you must come in."

She rose, bowed slightly: —

"Good-night, Monsieur Tartarin."

And she left him, all emotion from the sweetness she had put into those words. For some moments longer he walked up and down the deck, hearing still that "Good-night, Monsieur Tartarin." But the commodore was right; the evening was getting chilly, and he made up his mind to go to bed.

Passing before the little salon, he saw through its half-opened door Pascalon seated at a table, his head in his hands, absorbed in the study of a dictionary.

"What are you doing there, child?"

The faithful secretary informed him of the scandal his abrupt departure had caused, the indignant whisperings round the table, and especially a certain mysterious phrase of Lieutenant Shipp, which the commodore had made him repeat to the great amusement of everybody.

"Though I understand English tolerably well," said Pascalon, "I could not make out what it meant; but I remembered a few words of it, and I am trying now to reconstruct the sentence."

During these explanations Tartarin had gone to bed, where he stretched himself out, much at his ease, his head in his foulard, a large glass of orange-flower at hand, and he asked, while lighting the pipe that he always smoked before going to sleep:

"Well, did you succeed in your translation?"

"Yes, my dear master, here it is: *In short, the Tarasconese type is only the Frenchman enlarged, exaggerated, as if seen through a magnifying prism.*"

"And you say they laughed at that?"

"All of them — lieutenant, doctor, the commodore himself, they never stopped laughing."

"You may know those English seldom have occasion to laugh if they can be amused by such silliness! Come, good-night, my child, go to bed."

And soon the two were in the land of dreams, where one found his Clorinde, the other the commodore's lady — for the Princess Likiriki was already remote.

The days followed the days, grouping themselves into weeks, and still the voyage lasted, — a charming, delightful trip, during which Tartarin, who loved to inspire sympathy and admiration, felt those blessings about him in varied forms. He might have said, with Victor Jacquemont (the celebrated French traveller): "How strange my position is among the English! These men, who seem so impassible, so cold and stiff among themselves, unbend immediately under my gayety. They become affectionate to one another for the first time in their lives. I make kind people, I make Frenchmen out of all the Englishmen with whom I am thrown for twenty-four hours."

Everybody on board the "Tomahawk," fore and aft, officers and sailors, adored him. There was no

longer any talk of being prisoner of war, or trial before an English tribunal; of course he would be released the moment they arrived at Gibraltar.

As for the sulky commodore, enchanted to find a partner of Pascalon's strength, he kept him every evening for hours over the chess-board, which rendered that poor unfortunate, sighing for his Clorinde, desperate, and prevented him from carrying to her between decks the dainties of his dinner. For the poor Tarasconese were compelled to continue an emigrant life, penned up in their galley; and it formed the secret sadness, the remorse of Tartarin while he perorated on the poop, where he held his court at the melancholy hour of the setting sun, to see down below on the forward deck his compatriots herded like cattle, under watchful sentinels, and turning their eyes away from him in horror, especially since the day when he fired at La Tarasque.

They had never forgiven him that crime, and he himself could not forget the shot that would surely bring him evil.

The ship had passed the straits of Malacca, the Red Sea, the headlands of Sicily, and was running down the Mediterranean to Gibraltar. One morning, land having been signalled, Tartarin and Pascalon were packing their trunks, aided by one of the stewards, when suddenly they felt the swaying sensation caused by the stoppage of a vessel. The "Tomahawk" had really stopped, and at the same moment the sound of approaching oars was heard.

"Look out, Pascalon," said Tartarin; "it may be the pilot. . ."

A boat hailed them, but it was not the pilot; it carried a French flag, and French sailors manned it; among them were two men dressed in black with tall hats. The soul of Tartarin stirred within him: —

"Ah! the French flag! . . Let me gaze upon it, my child."

He sprang to the porthole; but at this moment the door of the cabin opened, letting in a flood of light together with two French agents of police in citizen's clothes, common and brutal in manner, but duly furnished with warrants for arrest and orders for extradition, who proceeded to lay their paws on the unfortunate State of Things and his secretary.

The Governor drew back, livid but dignified:

"Take care what you do. I am Tartarin of Tarascon."

"Yes, and it is you we are looking for."

Behold them both, Governor and secretary, prisoners, without a word of explanation or reply to their reiterated questions; without knowing what they had done, why they were arrested, or where they were being taken. Imagine the shame of passing, in irons (for they were handcuffed) before the officers and sailors of the British ship, assailed by the laughs and hoots of their compatriots, who leaned over the bulwarks applauding and shouting at the top of their voices: "Well done! . . *zou!* . . *zou!* . . " while the captives were being put into the boat.

At that moment Tartarin would gladly have been engulfed in the sea. From prisoner of war like Napoleon and Themistocles, to fall to the condition of a common thief! . .

And the lady of the commodore was looking at him!

Ah! decidedly he was right. La Tarasque was taking her revenge, and she took it cruelly.

III.

Continuation of Pascalon's Memorial.

JULY 5. Prison of Tarascon-sur-Rhone. I am just returned from examination. I know, at last, of what we are accused, the Governor and I, and why, abruptly seized on the "Tomahawk," harpooned on the road to happiness, wakened from dreams of joy, like two poor crayfish flung out of water, we were transferred to a French ship, brought to Marseilles handcuffed, and sent to Tarascon for solitary confinement in the prison of the town.

We are accused of swindling, and of homicide by reason of imprudence, and infraction of the laws of emigration. Ah! as for that, it is very certain I infringed it, that law of emigration, for this is the first time I ever heard the name, merely the name, of that slut of a law.

After two days' incarceration, forbidden absolutely to speak to a soul, — and that is terrible to a Tarasconese, — we were taken to-day before the examining judge, M. Bonaric. That magistrate began his career in Tarascon about ten years ago; and he knows me perfectly, having come at least a hundred times to the pharmacy, where I prepared him salves for a chronic eczema he had in his cheek.

Nevertheless, he asked my name, Christian name, age, profession, as if we had never seen each other. I was made to tell all I knew about the affair of Port-Tarascon; I had to talk two hours without stopping. His clerk could not keep up with me, I went so fast. After which, neither good-day nor good-evening, but: "Prisoner, you may retire."

In the corridor of the court-house I found my poor Governor, whom I had not seen since the day of our incarceration. He seemed to me greatly changed. As we passed, he pressed my hand and said in his kind voice: —

"Courage! child. Truth is like oil; it always comes to the top."

He could say no more, for the gendarmes dragged him away brutally.

Gendarmes for him! . . Tartarin in irons at Tarascon! . . And the rage, the hatred of a whole people! . .

I shall always have in my ears those cries of fury of the populace, that hot breath of the riff-raff, as the cellular van of the law took us back to prison, each padlocked in his own compartment. I could see nothing, but I heard all around us the uproar of the crowd. Once the vehicle was stopped on the Market-place; I knew where we were by the smell that came in through the chinks, like the breath of the town itself, that odour of tomatoes and artichokes, of Cavaillon melons and red peppers, and big mild onions. Merely to smell those good, nice things of which I have been so long deprived, made my mouth water.

There was such a crowd, our horses evidently could not get on. Tarascon full, overflowing, enough to make one believe that no one had ever been killed, or drowned, or devoured by anthropophagi. Certainly I felt sure I recognized the voice of Cambalalette the registrar. But how could that be? It must have been an illusion, for did not Bézuquet himself eat him, our much regretted Cambalalette? I am certain I heard the gong of Excourbaniès; no one could mistake that; it howled above all the other cries: "To the water! .. *Zou!* .. To the Rhone! to the Rhone! .. *Fen dé brut!* To the water, Tartarin!"

To the water, Tartarin! .. What a lesson of history! What a page for this Memorial!

I forgot to say that Judge Bonaric returned me my journal, seized on board the "Tomahawk." He found it interesting, and even advised me to continue it. Apropos of certain Tarasconese expressions which have slipped in now and then, I saw him smile a little between his red whiskers.

From July 5 *to July* 15. The prison of the town of Tarascon is an historical building, the old castle of King René, which is seen from a distance along the Rhone, flanked by its four towers. We have had bad luck with historical castles. In Switzerland, when our illustrious Tartarin was taken for a Nihilist leader, and we with him, they flung us into Bonnivard's dungeon in the Castle of Chillon. Here, it is true, things are much less gloomy, for there 's the sun, and the full light of it, cooled by

the Rhone breezes; it does not rain here as it does in Switzerland and Port-Tarascon.

My cell is very narrow: four walls of rough stone, an iron bed, a table, and a chair. The sun comes in through a barred window, high up, overhanging the Rhone. It was from here, during the Revolution, that the Jacobins were flung into the river to the famous air of: *Dé brin o dé bran, cabussaran. . .* As the popular repertory does not change much, they are now singing it to us, that threatening chorus! I do not know where they have lodged the poor Governor, but he must hear, as plainly as I do, these shouts that come up in the evening from the banks of the Rhone, and surely he must be making strange reflections.

If they had only put us together! . . Though, to tell the truth, I take a certain comfort in being alone; in possessing myself, as it were. Intimacy with a great man is wearing at times. He talks to you only of himself; he does not care for what interests you. So that on the "Tomahawk" not a moment did I have to myself, not an instant to be near my Clorinde. How many times I said to myself: "She is down there!" But never could I get away. After dinner, I had to play chess with the commodore, and the rest of the day Tartarin never let go of me, especially after I told him about the Memorial. "Write this. . ." he would say. "Don't forget that. . ." And the anecdotes about himself! about his relatives even, which were not at all interesting.

Think how Las Cases did the same for years

and years! The Emperor would wake him at six o'clock in the morning and carry him off, on foot, on horseback, in a carriage, and as soon as they had started: "Where were we, Las Cases? . . Now continue. . . When I signed the treaty of Campo-Formio. . ." The poor confidant had his own affairs too, — a child very ill, his wife left in France, — but what was that to the other, who was thinking only of relating himself and explaining himself before Europe, the Universe, Posterity, all day, and at all hours, and for years and years! The true martyr at Saint Helena was not Napoleon, it was Las Cases.

As for me, at the present moment I am spared that trial. God is my witness that I did nothing to bring this about. They parted us themselves, and I have profited by the separation to think of myself, of my own misfortune, which is great, and of my much-loved Clorinde.

Does she believe me guilty? She, no; but her family, all those Espazettes de l'Escudelle de Lambesc? . . Among that class of people a man without a title is always guilty. In any case, I have no hope now that they will ever accept me as a husband for Clorinde, fallen as I am from grandeur. I shall return to my employment behind Bézuquet's bottles, at the pharmacy, on the little square. . . And this is Fame!

July 17. One thing makes me very uneasy; no one has come to see me in my prison. They are as angry with me as with my master. My

amusement in my solitary cell is to mount upon the table, and in that way I reach the window, and there, truly, is a marvellous view between the bars.

The Rhone rolls scattered sun among its little islands of a tender green which the breeze ruffles up. The sky is filled with a black whirl of swifts and their little cries as they pursue each other, brushing close to me, or dropping from great heights; while far below that iron bridge is swaying, so long, so slight, that we look to see it gone daily, carried off like a hat.

On the banks of the river are the ruins of old castles, — that of Beaucaire with the town at its feet; those of Courtezon and Vacqueiras. Behind their thick walls, battered now by time, were held in other days the "tournaments of love;" where troubadours, the poets of Provence, were loved by the queens whom they sang — as Pascalon has sung his Clorinde. But what a change, since those far-distant days! The sumptuous manors are running wild with briars, the poets of our gay Provence may sing of dames and damoisels, but the damoisels will laugh at them!

One sight less saddening is that of the canal of Beaucaire, with its boats, painted green or yellow, moored in a mass; and on the quays the bright red spots made by the soldiery whom I see from my window as they strut about. They ought to be much pleased, those Beaucaire people, at the Governor's misfortune and the downfall of our great man, for Tartarin's renown always offended them, those vainglorious fellows over there! I

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very extraordinary, that flame, lighted at the top of a ruined tower precisely in front of his prison.

July 18. Coming back to-day from another examination, I heard, as the cellular vehicle passed the church of Saint Martha, the ever-imperious voice of the Marquise des Espazettes calling, in the accent of these parts: "Cloréinde! . . Cloréinde! . ." and a soft, angelic voice, the voice of my beloved, replying: "Yes, mamma." No doubt she was going to church to pray for me, for a safe issue to the trial.

Returned to my prison, much overcome, and committed to paper a few Provençal verses on the happy omen of this encounter.

That evening, at the same hour, the same fire on the tower of Beaucaire. It shines, over there, in the darkness like the bonfires which they light for the Saint John. Evidently it *is* a signal.

Tartarin, with whom I was able to exchange a few words in the judge's corridor, saw the fire, as I did, through the bars of his window; and when I told him what I thought, namely, that his friends were wishing to help him to escape, like Napoleon at Saint Helena, he seemed much struck with that coincidence.

"Ah! really, Napoleon at Saint Helena. . . Did they attempt to save him?" But after a moment's reflection he declared to me that he would never consent. "Assuredly, it is not the descent of three hundred feet by a rope-ladder, shaken in the darkness by the winds of the Rhone, that frightens me.

No, do not think that, my child... What I fear far more is that I should seem to be flying from an accusation: Tartarin of Tarascon will never escape!"

Ah! if all those who howled as he passed along "To the Rhone! *Zou!* to the Rhone!" could only have heard him then!.. And they accuse him of swindling!.. they think him the accomplice of that wretched Duc de Mons!.. Come, come! How could it be possible?..

At any rate, Tartarin no longer sustains him, his duke, any more; he rates him at his true value, that scoundrel of a Belgian! The world will hear his grand defence — for Tartarin is determined to defend himself before the tribunal. As for me I stutter too much to speak in public. I shall be defended by Cicéron Branquebalme, and everybody knows what incomparable logic he puts into all his pleadings.

July 20, *Evening.* These hours that I am made to spend with the examining judge are very painful to me. The difficulty is not in defending myself, but in not bearing hard upon my poor master. He has been so imprudent; he had such confidence in that Duc de Mons! And besides, with an intermittent eczema like that of M. Bonaric you never know whether to hope or fear; the malady goes to extremes both ways in this magistrate; he is furious when it is "out," and very good-natured when it is "in."

Something of the same kind is seen, and will

always be seen, in the unfortunate Bézuquet, who got along with his tattooing very comfortably down there, in that distant ocean; but now beneath Tarasconese skies, he hates himself, never goes out, and burrows as much as he can in the depths of the pharmacy, where he concocts herbs and unguents, and serves his clients behind a velvet mask, like the conspirators in a comic opera.

It is remarkable how sensitive men are to all such physical evils, spots, pimples, eczemas; more so, perhaps, than women. This, no doubt, is the reason why Bézuquet is so rancorous against Tartarin, the cause of all his woes.

July 24. Summoned again before M. Bonaric; I think for the last time. He showed me a bottle found among the islands by a fisherman of the Rhone, and made me read a letter which was inside of it: —

Tartarin — Tarascon — Prison of the town — Courage! A friend is watching over you on the other side of the bridge. He will cross it when the right moment comes.

A Victim of the Duc de Mons.

The judge asked me if I had ever before seen that writing. I answered that I did not know it; and then, as one should always tell the truth, I added that once before the same style of correspondence had been tried with Tartarin. Just before our departure from Tarascon, a bottle exactly like this one had been brought to him which con-

tained a letter, to which he attached no importance, thinking it a practical joke.

The judge said: "Very good," and then, as before: "You may retire."

July 26. The preliminary examinations are finished, and the trial is announced as close at hand. The town is at a white heat. The debates begin about the 1st of August. From now till then I shall not sleep. Indeed, it is long since I have been able to sleep in peace in this narrow cell as hot as an oven. I am obliged to leave the window open, so that clouds of mosquitoes get in, besides which I hear the rats gnawing in all the corners.

During these last days I have had several interviews with Cicéron Branquebalme. He spoke of Tartarin with much bitterness. I think he is vexed with him for not trusting him with his case. Poor Tartarin! no one is for him.

It seems that the whole bench of judges has been changed. Branquebalme gave me the names of the new men: President, Mouillard; associates, Beckmann and Robert du Nord. Not a single influence can be brought to bear. Those gentlemen are not from these parts, they tell me. In fact, their names indicate it.

For I know not what reason they have dropped the indictment of homicide from imprudence and infraction of the laws of emigration. Summoned to appear: Tartarin of Tarascon, the Duc de Mons (I shall be astonished if *he* makes his appearance), and Pascal Testanière called Pascalon.

July 31. Night of fever and anguish. The trial is to-morrow. Stayed in bed very late. I have only enough strength left to write upon the wall this old Tarasconese proverb, which I have so often heard repeated by Bravida, who knew them all: —

To stay in bed and sleep not,
To wait for one who comes not,
To love without love's pleasures,
Are three things to die of.

IV.

A trial in the South. Contradictory evidence. Tartarin swears before God and man. The embroiderers of Tarascon. Rugimabaud eaten by a shark. An unexpected witness.

HA! *boufre* no, they were not of these parts, those judges of poor Tartarin. To be convinced of that you had only to look at them on the blazing afternoon in August when the case of the Governor was brought up in the great hall of the court-house, filled to bursting the walls.

The month of August in Tarascon, I must tell you, is the month of oppressive heat, as hot as it is in Algeria; and the precautions taken against the burning heavens are the same as those of our African cities: retreat from the streets before midday, soldiers kept in barracks, awnings before all the shops. But Tartarin's trial had changed these local habits, and we can easily imagine the temperature of that great court-room packed full of people, with ladies in furbelows and plumed hats piled into the galleries at the lower end.

Two o'clock was striking in the tower of the court-house, and through the tall, broad windows, wide open and furnished with long yellow curtains that served as blinds, there entered, with pulsations of reverberating light, a deafening hum of grass-

hoppers, clinging to the planes and the hornbeams of the Promenade (tall trees white with dust), together with the noises of the crowd below and the cries of the water-carriers, as in the arena on a race-day: "Who wants to drink? Fresh water! cool water!"

Truly, one had to be born in Tarascon to endure the heat of that hall, a heat in which even a man condemned to death would have gone to sleep while they sentenced him. Therefore, of course, the most utterly crushed beings present were the three judges, all of them strangers to this broiling South. The president, Mouillard, a Lyonese, a sort of Swiss Frenchman, austere, with a long head, bald and philosophic, made one think of weeping even to look at him. His two associates were more Northern than he; Beckmann coming from Lille, and Robert du Nord from even higher.

No sooner was the case opened than these gentlemen fell, in spite of themselves, into a species of vague torpor, their eyes fixed on the great squares of light appearing behind the yellow curtains; and during the interminable summoning of witnesses, two hundred and fifty at the very least, they ended by dropping asleep altogether. The gendarmes, who were not Southerners either, and who were cruelly compelled to wear their heavy paraphernalia, were also asleep.

Undoubtedly, these were bad conditions for the rendering of true justice. Happily, the magistrates had studied the affair in advance; without which they certainly would have understood nothing;

hearing naught, in their inattentive somnolence, but the noise of the grasshoppers and a confused buzzing of flies and voices.

After the defiling of the witnesses. the substitute attorney-general Bompard du Mazet, began the reading of the indictment. Downright Southerner, that one! A little hairy, dishevelled, pot-bellied man, with a stubbly black beard, protruding eyes that looked as if they were half-gouged and quite bloody with their mass of vesicles, a brassy voice that spit metal into your ears, and grimaces, contortions, oh! . . The glory of the Tarasconese bar. . . People flocked from leagues around to hear him; but this time, that which spiced his speech was the relationship of its orator to the famous Bompard, the first victim of the affair of Port-Tarascon.

Never did a public prosecutor show himself so bitter, more impassioned, less just, less impartial: that's what they like in Tarascon; anything that vibrates, whatever stirs you up! . . How he shook that poor Tartarin, seated, with his secretary, between two gendarmes! What a rag the slavering fangs of the orator made of that past of glory!

Pascalon, aghast and ashamed, hid his head in his hands; but Tartarin, he — very calm — listened, his head raised, his eyes clear, feeling his day at an end, the hour come of the great decline, knowing well that there are natural laws of grandeur as of weight, and resigned to endure them all; while Bompard du Mazet, more and more insulting, represented him as a vulgar swindler,

"A little hairy, dishevelled . . . man, with a stubby black beard"

having an illusory fame of lions probably never slain, ascensions probably never made; associating himself with a low adventurer, with that Duc de Mons whom justice would never find even by the arm of the law. He made out Tartarin to be a greater scoundrel than the duke, who at least had not swindled compatriots, whereas he, Tartarin, had speculated on the Tarasconese, he had robbed them, ruined them, reduced them to beggary from door to door, and to find their food in the very sweepings of the streets. "But what could you expect, gentlemen of the Court, from a man who fired on La Tarasque, on our *mère-grand?* . ."

At this peroration, patriotic sobs shook the court-room; howls responded from the street, which the voice of the sub-attorney-general reached through doors and windows. He himself, overcome by his own accents, wept and gurgled so loud that the judges woke up with a start, thinking, perhaps, that the gutters and conduits of the court-house must have burst under a sudden storm of rain.

Bompard du Mazet had been speaking five hours.

At this moment, though the heat was still exhausting, a little breeze from the Rhone began to swell the yellow curtains at the windows. President Mouillard did not go to sleep again; newly appointed to this region, the amazement into which he was plunged by the inventive fire of these Tarasconese served largely to keep him awake.

Tartarin was the first to give signal of that art-

less, delightful imposture which is the aroma, the bouquet of the region.

At one part of his examination (which we think it best to shorten) he rose suddenly, and said, with uplifted hand: —

"I swear, before God and man, that I never wrote that letter."

This related to a letter sent by him from Marseilles to Pascalon, editor of the "Gazette," to spur him up and excite him to more fruitful, more abundant inventions in favour of the enterprise.

No, a thousand times no, the accused had never written that letter; he denied, he protested: "Possibly, I will not answer as to this, the Sieur Mons, non-appearing . . ." And as he hissed from his scornful lips those words "non-appearing," the president said: —

"Pass the letter to the accused."

Tartarin took it, looked at it, and said very simply: —

"True, that is my writing. The letter is from me, but I had forgotten it."

'T was enough to make a tiger weep.

A moment later, the same episode with Pascalon, apropos of an article in the "Gazette" relating the reception in the town-hall at Port-Tarascon of the passengers of the "Farandole" and the "Lucifer" by King Negonko, and the aborigines of the island, together with a detailed description of the said town-hall.

The reading of this article aroused at every sentence inextinguishable roars of laughter among

the audience, interrupted by cries of indignation; Pascalon himself was shocked, and protested from his seat, with much twirling of the arms, that it was not by him, never in the world should he have signed such monstrous improbabilities.

They laid before his eyes the printed article, illustrated by vignettes made from his descriptions, and signed by his name, together with his own written copy, found at the Trinquelague printing-office.

"It is amazing," said the luckless Pascalon, his eyes starting out of his head; "that article had completely gone out of my head."

Tartarin here took up the defence of his secretary: —

"The truth, Monsieur le président, is this: blindly believing all the tales of the Sieur Mons, non-appearing —"

"He has a broad back, your Sieur Mons," sneered the substitute attorney-general.

"— I gave to this unfortunate youth," continued Tartarin, "the idea of that article, saying to him: 'Embroider it;' and he did embroider it."

"It is true that I never did anything but embr-br-broider . . ." stuttered Pascalon, timidly.

Embroidery! ah! . . President Mouillard was now to see it in examining the witnesses, all from Tarascon, all inventive, all denying to-day what they had stated yesterday.

"But you said that on your preliminary examination."

"I — I said that? . . ah! *vaï*. . . I never opened my lips."

"But you signed it."

"Signed it? . . Never in the world. . ."

"Here is your signature."

"*Pardi!* that's true. . . Well, Monsieur le président, nobody can be more surprised than I am."

And it was the same with all of them. Not one remembered anything. The judges were distracted, aghast before these contradictions, these appearances of bad faith; not understanding — cold men of the North that they were — how to make allowances for the invention and fancy of the lands of the sun.

One of the most extraordinary among the witnesses was Costecalde, relating how he had been driven from the island, forced to abandon his wife and children by the actions of that tyrant Tartarin. You ought to have heard his drama of the yawl, the frightful and successive deaths of his companions; Rugimabaud, swimming beside the boat to get a little coolness, suddenly dragged down by a shark and bitten in two.

"Ah! that smile of my friend . . . I see it still . . . he stretched his arms to me . . . I was leaning to him, when suddenly his face became convulsed, he disappeared beneath the waves, and nothing . . . nothing but a ring of blood widening on the water;" here he described a large circle before him with his clenched fist, while from his eyes fell tears as big as peas.

Hearing the name of Rugimabaud, the two judges Beckmann and Robert du Nord, who had

just waked up, leaned towards the president, and during the universal explosion caused by Costecalde's narrative, their three black caps were seen doddling to one another.

President Mouillard addressed the witness.

"You say that Rugimabaud was eaten before your eyes by a shark? But this Court has just heard that a certain Rugimabaud arrived here this morning . . . May he not be the man who was with you in the boat? . ."

"Of course, exactly . . . It *is* me, I am the man . . ." called out the former sub-director of agriculture.

"*Tiens!* Rugimabaud is here," said Costecalde, not in the least disturbed. "I did not see him; this is the first I knew of it."

A black cap observed: —

"He cannot have been eaten by a shark as you described."

"I must have confounded him with Truphénus. . ."

"*Boufre!* but here I am, myself, and I have n't been eaten," protested the voice of Truphénus.

Costecalde, beginning to get impatient, exclaimed: —

"Well, no matter who it was! I know that one was eaten by a shark, for I saw the blood."

And thereupon he continued his testimony as if nothing had happened. Before he left the witness-stand, the president asked him how many, in his opinion, was the number of victims. The witness replied: —

"Forty thousand, at least."

As the registers of the colony showed that there had never been more than four hundred persons on the island, you can imagine the bewilderment of President Mouillard and his associates. They perspired in streams, unhappy men, having never before heard such arguments or such extraordinary depositions. Nothing was obtained from the crowd of witnesses but contradictory statements, savage denials, violent interruptions; they bounded about, tore the words from each other's lips till it seemed as if the lips would come too; and all this with demoniacal jeers and laughter and grinding of teeth! A fantastic, tragi-comical trial, where the whole matter turned on the drowned, eaten, cooked, roasted, boiled, devoured, tattooed, chopped-into-bits Tarasconese, who were each and all present, sitting on the same bench, perfectly well, in possession of all their limbs, without a tooth missing and not so much as a scratch.

The two or three witnesses who were absent at the summons were hourly expected; but they were certain to be of the same stripe as their companions. It was in view of all this that the examining judge Bonaric, better used to the ways of his compatriots, had advised President Mouillard to put aside the question of homicide by imprudence. Nevertheless the wrangling of the witnesses continued, getting more and more noisy and ludicrous. From the body of the hall the public took part, vilifying, applauding, laughing without fear or shame under the very nose of the

president, who threatened again and again to clear the court-room; but being himself bewildered by so much uproar and incoherence, he did not clear anything at all, but sat with his elbows on the table holding his head, which was ready to burst, in his two hands.

In a comparative lull of the storm, Robert du Nord, a tall thin old man, with ironical lips between a pair of long and floating white whiskers, said, as he threw himself back, his cap on one ear: —

"As a matter of fact, I see, in all this, that no one, except La Tarasque, has failed to get back."

The substitute attorney-general sprang up suddenly from his seat like a jack-in-the-box.

"And my uncle?" he cried.

"Yes, Bompard?" echoed the hall.

The substitute continued in his ophicleidical voice: —

"I call the attention of the Court to the fact that my uncle Bompard was one of the first victims. If I have had the discretion to refrain from speaking of him in my speech, it is none the less true that he, at least, has never returned, and never can return . . ."

"Pardon me, monsieur," interrupted the president, "a Monsieur Bompard has just sent his card to me with a request to be heard . . . Is he your uncle?"

He was indeed, — Bompard (Gonzague).

That name, so well known to all Tarascon, raised an immense tumult. The public, the witnesses,

the accused, everybody was afoot, on the benches, craning, shouting, trying to see, breathless with impatience and curiosity. Confronted by this excitement, President Mouillard ordered a suspension of the proceedings for some moments, which was taken advantage of to carry away half-a-dozen fainting gendarmes nearly dead with heat and bewilderment.

V.

Bompard has crossed the bridge. History of a letter with five red seals. Bompard appeals to all Tarascon, which makes him no reply. "But read the letter, read it! coquin de sort!" Liars of the North, and Liars of the South.

"THAT's he, that's Gonzague! . . *Vé! Vé!*"

"How stout he has grown!"

"Is n't he white!"

"Looks like a *Teur*."

Since the last time they saw him he had so changed that our Tarasconese hardly knew their old Bompard: so thin formerly, with his moustached head of a Greek Palikare and the eyes of a crazy goat; fat now, — *boudenfle*, as they say down there, — though still the same moustache, the same delirious eyes in his puffy and broadened face.

Without looking either to the right or the left, he marched behind the usher to the witness-stand.

Questioned: —

"Are you really Gonzague Bompard?"

"To tell the truth, Monsieur le président, I almost doubt it when I see" (emphatic gesture towards the prisoner's dock) — "when I see, I say, upon that bench of infamy our purest glory, when

I hear insults hurled within these precincts upon honour and integrity itself. . ."

"Thank you, Gonzague," exclaimed Tartarin, strangling with emotion.

He had borne insults without flinching, but the sympathy of his old comrade burst his heart and made him cry like a child who is pitied. Bompard resumed: —

"Ha! my valiant fellow-citizen, you shall not rot there upon that dirty bench, for I bring with me proof . . . proof. . ."

He searched his pockets, pulling out a Marseilles pipe, a knife, an old flint, some tinder, a ball of twine, a foot rule, a barometer, a box of homeopathic globules, all of which things he laid, one by one, on the clerk's table.

"Go on, witness Bompard, if you have finished," said the president, impatiently.

To which the substitute Bompard du Mazet added: —

"Come, uncle, make haste."

The uncle turned round and looked at him: —

"Ha! yes; I advise you to talk, after what you allowed your tongue to say about my poor friend! . . Wait till I make my will and disinherit you, scoundrel!"

The nephew was cold under this threat; and the uncle, continuing the search through his various pockets and spreading before him a collection of fantastic objects, came at last to what he was seeking, — a large envelope sealed with five red seals.

"Monsieur le président, here is a document

from which it appears that the Duc de Mons is the greatest of villains, of galley-slaves, of . . ." The big words were coming. The president interrupted them: —

"Very good; hand up the document."

President Mouillard opened the mysterious letter, and having read it, he communicated it to his two associates, who put their noses over it and sifted it carefully, without betraying the slightest sign of their impressions. Regular judges of the North, *pardi!* locked, padlocked! . .

What was there in that rascally letter? With that type of judge it was hard to get the slightest idea. All present stood up, climbed up, leaned over, made a focus of their hands and questioned one another on all sides: —

"*Qu'ès aco?* What the devil can it be?"

And as all the incidents of the session were known outside, thanks to the open doors and windows, a great hubbub arose along the Promenade, confused clamours, the roar of a surging wave when a strong breeze drives it.

This time the gendarmes no longer slept, the bunches of flies on the ceiling woke up, and, the freshness of the cool of the evening having penetrated the hall, the Tarasconese who were nearest the windows demanded, with that terror of draughts peculiar to the race, that they be instantly closed, or "we 'll all get our deaths of cold."

For the hundredth time President Mouillard shouted: "Silence! or I 'll clear the court," and finally the examination continued.

Question. Witness Bompard, how did this letter come into your hands, and when?

Answer. On the departure of the "Farandole," from Marseilles, the Duc, or the so-called Duc de Mons, gave me my powers as provisionary governor of Port-Tarascon; and at the same time he slipped into my hand this envelope, sealed with five red seals — although there was no money inside. I should find within it, he said, his last instructions, and he exhorted me not to open it until we reached the Admiralty isles, northeast of Papua, I forget in what degree of latitude and longitude. But it is marked on the envelope, and you can see for yourself. . .

Q. Yes, yes, I see. . . And then?

A. And then, Monsieur le président, I was taken with a sudden illness, — they may have told you about it, — contagious in its nature, gangrenous and everything, so that they were obliged to put me ashore in a dying condition at the Château d'If. Once on land I writhed in agony, the letter still in my pocket, because I had forgotten, on account of my sufferings, to give it to Bézuquet when I handed him my powers. . .

Q. A regrettable omission. . . After which?

A. After which, Monsieur le président, when I became a little better, so that I could rise and put on my clothes, though not yet strong — ah! if you could have seen what I looked like! — one day I chanced to put my hand in my pocket. . . *Té!* the letter with the red seals! . .

The president, in a stern tone: —

"Witness Bompard, would it not be more consistent with truth to say that this letter, intended to be unsealed and read four thousand miles from France, you preferred to open at once, in the port of Marseilles, in order to discover what was in it, and when you had read its contents you recoiled at the enormous responsibility laid upon you?"

"You do not know Bompard, Monsieur le président. I appeal to all Tarascon, here present."

A silence as of the grave replied to this oratorical effect. Nicknamed "the Impostor" by his fellow-citizens, who are not themselves very scrupulous in the matter of veracity, Bompard showed a really bold pluck in calling them to witness. Tarascon, thus appealed to, made no reply. Bompard, quite unabashed, remarked: —

"You see, Monsieur le président . . . silence gives consent." Then he resumed his tale: "When I found the letter, Bézuquet, already gone some weeks, was too far away to send it after him. I decided, therefore, that I had better learn its contents. You can imagine my horrible situation. . ."

Very horrible also was the situation of the audience, who did not yet know what was in that letter which lay upon the judge's desk, and about which they were all talking. Necks were stretched to the utmost, but nothing could be seen but the five red, hypnotizing seals of that envelope, which, minute by minute, seemed to enlarge, becoming at last enormous.

Bompard continued: —

"What, I ask you, was I to do, after obtaining

the knowledge of that atrocity? . . Overtake the 'Farandole' by swimming? I thought of it for a moment, but I doubted my strength. Prevent the 'Tutu-panpan' from sailing by revealing to my compatriots the contents of that abominable letter; quench their enthusiasm by that great dash of cold water? Why, they would have stoned me! In short, the truth is, I was frightened. . . I did not even dare to show myself in Tarascon on account of my embarrassment to know what to say. Then it was that I hid myself opposite, in Beaucaire, where I could see all and not be seen myself. I combined two positions: keeper of the fair grounds and warden of the castle. I had some leisure, as you may suppose. From the height of that old tower, with a good glass, I could see from the other side of the Rhone the excitement of my unfortunate fellow-citizens preparing to depart. I was gnawed inwardly, I was in despair. . . I stretched my arms to them, I cried to them from afar as though they could have heard me: 'Stop! . . Do not go! . .' I even tried to prevent them by a bottle. . . Tell them, Tartarin, tell these gentlemen that I did attempt to warn you."

"I corroborate him," said Tartarin, from the bench of infamy.

"Ah! what I suffered, Monsieur le président, when I saw the 'Tutu-panpan' depart for the land of chimeras! . . But I suffered far more when they returned, when I knew that before me, groaning in irons, lying on straw like a heap of rowens, was my illustrious compatriot, Tartarin —

To know him in that tower, falsely accused! . . *Différemment*, you will tell me that I ought to have produced sooner that proof of his innocence; but when you have once set out on a bad path it is the devil and all to get back to a good one. I had begun by saying nothing, and it was more and more difficult to say anything; not to speak of my fear of that bridge, that terrible bridge I had to cross in order to get here. . . Nevertheless, I *have* crossed it, that devilish bridge, I crossed it this morning, in a frightful tornado, obliged to creep on my hands and knees, as I did in ascending the Mont Blanc. You remember, Tartarin?"

"Do I remember!" said Tartarin, sadly, with regret for those hours of glory.

"Heavens! how it lurched, that bridge! and the heroism that it took to get across! . . But I don't like to praise myself. Finally, here I am, and this time I bring the proof, irrefragable proof. . ."

"Irrefragable, do you really think so?" said President Mouillard, in his tranquil voice. "What guarantee have we that this strange letter, so long forgotten in your pocket, is really from the Duc de Mons or the person so calling himself? You seem to me, all you Tarasconese, persons to be very cautious about. . . The lies that I have listened to for the last seven hours! . ."

A low growl as of wild beasts in a cage rolled through the hall, through the galleries, and out along the Promenade to the Tour-de-Ville. Tarascon was not pleased, and it protested. Gonzague Bompard, he was satisfied to smile ineffably.

"As for what concerns me, Monsieur le président, to tell you that I never exaggerate when I talk, or that you could make me a director of the department *Veritas*, I shall not go so far as that; but I do say, address yourself to that man" —he designated Tartarin. "As veracity, he is the best we have in Tarascon."

Thus invoked, it did not take Tartarin long to recognize the writing and signature of the Duc de Mons; writing and signature unhappily but too well known to him. Then, standing erect, and facing his judges, and brandishing with one angry hand that terrible mystery with the five seals, he said: —

"In my turn, Monsieur le président, armed with this cynical lucubration, I adjure you to recognize that all impostors are not in the South. Ah! you call us liars, we Tarasconese. But we are only a people of imagination with an overflow of words, troubadours, embroiderers, fertile improvisers, drunk with sap and sun; men who are deceived themselves by their own stupendous and ingenuous imaginings. What a difference between them and your liars of the North, without joy, without spontaneity, liars who always have an object, a rascally aim, like the writer of this letter! Yes, certainly, it can be said that in the matter of lying when the North takes it up the South cannot hold a candle to it! . ."

Starting on that theme before a Tarasconese audience, Tartarin might once have carried the whole public with him. But it was all over now

with the poor great man and his popularity. No one listened to him any longer. All they thought of at this moment was the mysterious missive which he flourished in his hand. He wanted to say more; they would not let him. From all parts of the hall the cries arose: —

"The letter! . . the letter! . ."

"Take it from him, *zou!*"

"Make him read that letter!"

Yielding to the will of the crowd, President Mouillard himself said: —

"Clerk, read the document."

An immense "Ah! . ." of relief and comfort, and then in the silence that followed nothing was heard but the buzzing of the August flies, and the *cra-cra* of the grasshoppers which rhythmed with the beating of those gasping breasts.

The clerk began, in a nasal voice: —

MY DEAR M. BOMPARD, — There is no good joke that should not have an end.

Turn about at once and return in peace to your own country, you and your Tarasconese.

There is no island, no treaty, no Port-Tarascon, neither wharves, nor acres, nor distilleries, nor sugar-canes, nor anything at all — Except an excellent financial operation which has brought me in several millions, now carefully secured and safe, as is also my august person.

In short, it is a jolly Tarasconnade, for which your compatriots, and their illustrious leader Tartarin, ought to forgive me, inasmuch as it has amused and occupied them, and restored their liking for their delightful little town, which they were beginning to lose.

DUC DE MONS.

No more a duke than he is from Mons.

This time, the president might threaten as much as he pleased to clear the hall. Nothing could restrain the howls, the roars that broke forth and reached the streets, the promenade, the esplanade, and filled the whole town. Ha! that Belgian, that dirty Belgian, if they had caught him then and there, how they would have pitched him through a window of the castle head-foremost into the Rhone!

Men, women, children, all took part in it; and it was in the midst of this fearful charivari that President Mouillard pronounced the acquittal of Tartarin and Pascalon; the latter to the great despair of Cicéron Branquebalme, forced to forego, to swallow his prepared discourse, his *verum enim veros*, and all the fine Roman cement of his monumental pleading.

The hall was emptied, the public poured itself out into the streets, the squares, the little squares, and on to the Tour-de-Ville, still vomiting its wrath in loud vociferations: Belgian!.. dirty Belgian!.. Liar of the North!.. Liar of the North!..

VI.

Continuation and End of Pascalon's Memorial.

October 8. Since taking my old position in the pharmacy Bézuquet, I have recovered the esteem of my fellow-citizens and returned to the tranquil existence of other days; with this difference, that Bézuquet now keeps himself in the recesses of the shop as if he were the pupil, and pounds the pestle in the marble mortar, grinding his drugs with a species of rage. From time to time he interrupts that occupation to pull a little mirror from his pocket and look at his tattooed visage. Unhappy Ferdinand! neither salves nor cataplasms, nothing will do, not even "a good little garlic soup" recommended by Dr. Tournatoire. He has them for life, those infernal illuminations!

I, on the other hand, I roll up, label, and dispense aloes and "ipecac"; I make talk with the customers, I amuse myself with all that happens in town. On market-days a great many persons come to us; Tuesdays and Fridays the pharmacy is never empty. Now that the vineyards are doing better, the peasants drug and poultice themselves once more. They adore it; a good purging is to them a fête.

The rest of the week we are becalmed; the shop bell seldom tinkles. I spend my time looking at the inscriptions on the large glass bottles and the white china pots ranged along the shelves: *sirupus gummi*, asafetida, and the ΦΑΡΜΑΚΟΠΕΙΑ inscribed in Greek above the counter between two serpents.

After so much emotion, so many adventures, this great repose of life does not displease me. I am preparing a volume of Provençal verses, "Li Gingourlo" (*The Jujubes*). In the North they only know jujubes as a pharmaceutical product; here the fruit of the jujube-tree is a charming, tasty little red olive, glowing amid the light green foliage. I shall place in this volume my landscape scenes and my love poems. . .

Pécaïre! I see her pass sometimes, my Clorinde, tall and supple, springing across the pointed stones of the square with what she used to call, down yonder, her "kangaroo skip"; she goes to the second mass, her prayer-book in her hand, attended by the girl Alric, — she who scaled the roofs and who has, since our return to Tarascon, passed from the service of Mlle. Tournatoire to that of these ladies des Espazettes. Not once has Clorinde looked towards the pharmacy. Since I re-entered it I exist for her no longer.

The town has resumed its tranquil, settled aspect. People walk as usual round the Tour-de-Ville and the Promenade; in the evenings they go to the club or the theatre. Everybody has returned, except Père Bataillet, who stopped at the Phil-

ippines to found a new community of the White-Fathers. Here the monastery of Pampérigouste is reopening, little by little; the Reverend Père Vézole (God be thanked!) has returned to it with several other reverends, and the bells have begun to ring softly, one by one, not the full chime as yet, but we think it will soon come.

Who would ever believe that all those strange events had happened! How distant they are already, and how ready to forget is this Tarasconese race! You have only to see our hunters. the Marquis des Espazettes at their head, going out all flaming new of a Sunday morning, with the same ardour of hope for game that has no existence.

As for me, on Sundays, after breakfast, I go to pay my respects to Tartarin. There indeed, at the end of the Promenade, is the house with the green blinds, the blacking-boxes of the little Savoyards still outside the railing; but all is closed, all is silent. I open the gate. . . I find the hero in his garden, walking round and round the basin of the gold-fish, with his hands behind his back; or else in his study, among his Krishes and poisoned arrows. He never looks at them, his dear collections. The surroundings are still the same, but how the man has changed! They acquitted him, it is true, but for all that the great man feels himself fallen, undone; he has lost his pedestal, and it is that which saddens him.

We talk. Dr. Tournatoire comes sometimes; he brings his good-humour and his Purgon jokes to that melancholy dwelling. Branquebalme al-

ways comes on Sundays. Tartarin has intrusted him with the defence of his interests in a suit at Toulon against Captain Scrapouchinat, who claims the passage-money of the returning colonists; also another suit with the Widow Bravida, who sues for damages for her minor children. If my poor dear master loses these two cases, how will he come out of it? He has already spent so much on that lamentable matter of Port-Tarascon.

Why am I not rich!.. Unhappily, what I earn from Bézuquet is not enough to enable me to aid him.

October 10. "The Jujubes" will appear in Avignon, from the publisher Roumanille; I am very glad. Another piece of good fortune: they are organizing a grand cavalcade in honour of Saint Martha's day, which falls on the 19th of this month, and also in celebration of the return of the Tarasconese to the soil of France. Dourladoure and I, both Felibrians, are to represent Provençal Poesy, mounted on an allegorical car.

October 20. Yesterday, Sunday, the cavalcade took place. Long procession of cars and men on horseback in historical costumes, the latter holding out at the end of long poles the alms-bags used for collecting. A great crowd, people at all the windows, but in spite of everything no gayety, no enthusiasm in the fête. The ingenuity of the organizers could not supply the absence of our *mère-grand;* we felt a vacuum, a void, the car of

La Tarasque was lacking. Suppressed rancour, roused up at this reminder of the luckless shot fired upon her down there in the Pacific. Groans were heard as the *cortège* passed before Tartarin's house. Costecalde's band endeavoured to excite the crowd by certain shouts, but the Marquis des Espazettes, in the costume of a Knight Templar, turned round upon his horse: "Peace, gentlemen!" he said... He had the true grand air, and at once all disorder was stopped.

The tramontane, the snow-wind, blew. Dourladoure and I, we felt it cruelly in our Charles VI. trunk-hose (lent by an opera troupe just then passing through Tarascon), seated, each, at the top of a tower — for our car, drawn by six white oxen, represented, in painted wood and pasteboard, the castle of King René. That rascal of a wind pierced us through and through, so that the verses we recited and the great lutes in our hands shivered and quaked as much as we did. Dourladoure said to me: "*Outre!* it is freezing!" But there was no way to get down, for the ladders by which they had hoisted us up were taken away.

On the Tour-de-Ville the torture became intolerable... And, to make things worse, an idea had come to me — vanity of love! — namely, to diverge across the town in order to pass the house of the Marquis des Espazettes. So there we were, involved in those very narrow streets, with only just room for the wheels of the car. The house of the des Espazettes was closed, gloomy and mute in its black stone walls, every shutter tight, to indicate

gave orders to all
caught, stuck, on
in front and they
between the walls
heard, quite close
and smothered lau
perched and shudd
board towers.

Decidedly, that ca
brought me luck.
oxen, and send for la
that took such a time

October 23. What i
for glory? Men cann
they have had it.

I was with Tartarin,
talked in the garde
gravelled paths. From
the Promenade were se
and as I noticed the me
to recall to him the tri
ence. But nothing co
even the analogies b
Emperor Napoleon's.

"Ah! *vaï*, Napoleo
sun of the tropics ha

Never speak to me of that again, I beg of you, if you want to please me."

I looked at him stupefied.

"But," I said, "the lady of the commodore — "

"Let me alone! she was laughing at me the whole time, that lady of the commodore!"

We walked a few steps in silence. The shouts of the shoeblacks playing before the gate came to us on the breeze that brought the dead leaves in whirls.

Then he said to me: —

"I see clear, at last. The Tarasconese have opened my eyes. It is just as if I had been operated upon for cataract."

He seemed to me very strange. At the gate he suddenly pressed my hand and said: —

"You know, my child, that all my things are to be sold. I have lost my suit with Scrapouchinat, and also with the Widow Bravida, in spite of Branquebalme's arguments . . . he builds too solidly, that good fellow; his Roman aqueduct toppled over and crushed us with its weight."

Timidly I ventured to offer him my poor little savings. I would have given them with all my heart, but Tartarin refused: —

"Thank you, my child; but I think the weapons, the curiosities, the rare plants will bring money enough. If they do not suffice, I must sell the house. Afterwards, I shall see what to do. Adieu, my child. . . This is all of no consequence."

What philosophy! . .

boulide. The old
stuffed parrot besid
my Clorinde and a
scarcely see, for th
wore a blue uniform
"Who is that with
"Why, that's the
Vicomte Charlexis c
chasseurs. Did n't y
is to marry him next
It was a blow! as o
to me, who still had ho
"It is a love marriag
the wife of Truphénus
proverb: 'Whoso marri
and bad days.'"
Yet *I* would gladly have

November 5. The sale
house yesterday. I was
balme came to the pharm
described the scene.
It seems it was heartrend
nothing. It was held in th
which is the custom in ou
of it, not a sou; and yet

people. Those weapons of all countries, poisoned arrows, yataghans, assagais, revolvers, the Winchester of 32 calibre, nothing offered for them. . . Nothing for those magnificent skins of the lions of Atlas; nothing for the alpenstock, his glorious trophy of the Jungfrau . . . all these precious things, these curiosities, the true museum of our town, sold at derisory prices. . . All faith in them gone!

And the baobab in its little pot, which for thirty years has been the admiration of the region! When they placed it on the table and the auctioneer called out, "*Arbos gigantea*, the largest known vegetable product, whole villages can be sheltered in its shade," it seems there was a wild burst of laughter. Tartarin heard it, that laugh, as he walked about the garden with two friends; to whom he said without bitterness: —

"They, too, have been operated on for cataract, my poor Tarasconese. They see clear now . . . but they are cruel."

The saddest part is, that as the sale has not produced enough, he is now forced to sell the house to the des Espazettes, who want it for the young household.

And he, the poor great man, where will he go? Will he cross the bridge, as he has vaguely hinted? Will he take refuge in Beaucaire with his old friend Bompard?

While Branquebalme, standing in the middle of the pharmacy, related to me these painful episodes, Bézuquet appeared for a moment through the half-

opened door at the farther end, his ineffaceable illuminations visible, and shouted with the laugh of a Papuan demon: "Serves him right! . . serves him right!" As if it were Tartarin himself who had tattooed him!

November 9. It is to-morrow, Sunday, that my kind master is to leave the town and cross the bridge. . . Can it be possible that Tartarin of Tarascon will be Tartarin of Beaucaire? . . Why, even to the ear, what a difference! . . And then, that bridge, that terrible bridge, to cross! I know that Tartarin has surmounted many obstacles! . . Perhaps this is one of the things that are threatened in moments of excitement, but are never done. I still doubt its possibility.

Sunday, November 10. Seven in the evening. I have returned, heart-broken, with barely strength to write a few lines.

It is done; he has gone; he has crossed the bridge.

We had all agreed to meet at his house, Tournatoire, Branquebalme, Baumevieille, and Malbos, a former militiaman. My heart was wrung with distress at those bare walls, that devastated garden. Tartarin did not even look around him. One thing we have good about us, we Tarasconese, is our mobility. By the help of that, we can really be less sad than other peoples.

He gave his keys to Branquebalme.

"Give them to the Marquis des Espazettes. I

am not vexed with him for not coming to bid me good-bye; it is quite natural. As Bravida used to say, 'The love of lords, when they have got all they want from us, does not last.'" Turning to me, he added: "You know something of that, my child."

This allusion to Clorinde touched me. To think of *me* under such circumstances!

Once out, on the Promenade, there came up a terrible wind. We thought to ourselves: "The bridge! beware of the bridge, presently!"

He himself did not seem the least in the world preoccupied. On account of the wind no one was in the streets; we met only the band returning from the esplanade; the soldiers, hampered by their instruments, were holding with one hand the capes of their coats which the wind was blowing over their heads.

Tartarin spoke slowly, walking along in the midst of us as if for a promenade. He talked about himself, nothing but himself, as was usual with him: —

"I, you see, I have had the disease of all the people of our parts. I have fed myself too long on *regardelle*. . ."

What we call in Tarascon "regardelle" is that which tempts the eye, that which we long for, and which our hand does not grasp. . . It is the food of dreamers, of men of imagination. Tartarin said true; no man ever consumed more *regardelle* than he.

As I was carrying the bag, the hat-box, and the

overcoat of my hero, I was a little behind the others, and I did not hear all. Words escaped me in the wind, which increased as we came near the Rhone. I heard him say, however, that he had no hard feelings to any one; and he spoke of his existence with gentle philosophy.

"That scamp of a Daudet has written of me that I was a Don Quixote in the skin of Sancho Panza. . . Well, he was right. That type of Don Quixote, puffing, pampered, potted in his grease, and always inferior to his dream, is very frequent in Tarascon and its suburbs."

A little farther on, at a turn of the road, we saw the darting back of Excourbaniès, who, in passing the shop of the gunsmith (appointed this very morning municipal councillor of the town), was shouting with all the force of his lungs: "Ha! ha! Long live Costecalde!"

"Even to him I feel no anger," said Tartarin, "although that man Excourbaniès represents the most horrible side of the Tarasconese South. I do not mean his shouts, though he really yells more than is reasonable; I speak of that dreadful desire to please, to be on the right side of people, which leads him into abject meannesses. Before Costecalde he shouts: 'To the Rhone with Tartarin.' With me, to flatter me, he would shout against Costecalde. Putting that aside, my children, what a charming race, this Tarasconese race! Without it, France would long ago have died of pedantry and ennui."

We reached the Rhone; before us a melancholy

setting sun; only a few clouds very high and distant. The wind seemed to lull; but for all that, the bridge was none the more secure. We stopped at the entrance to it; he asked us to go no farther.

"Well now, farewell, my children. . ."

We embraced; he began with Baumevieille, the eldest, and ended with me. I wept in streams, and as I could not wipe my face because of the bag and the overcoat, I can truly say that the great man drank my tears.

Agitated himself, he took his property, the hat-box in one hand, the valise in the other, with the overcoat over his arm, and as Tournatoire said to him: —

"Above all, Tartarin, take care of yourself . . . unhealthy climate, Beaucaire . . . garlic soup . . . don't forget," he answered, with a wink of the eye:

"The farther the old woman went — the more she learned just what life meant — 'and for that,' she said, 'die I will *not*.' And I shall take pattern by her."

We saw him go farther and farther away beneath the arches; a little heavily, and yet with a good step. The bridge swayed awfully. Twice or thrice he stopped because his hat was blowing off. We called to him in the distance, but without advancing: —

"Adieu, Tartarin!"

He never turned; he said nothing, too much moved; but with the hat-box he waved us a signal behind him: —

"Adieu. . . Adieu. . ."

Three months later. Sunday evening. I open this Memorial, long interrupted, this old green register, which I shall leave to my children (if I ever have any), worn at the corners, begun five thousand leagues from France, — my journal which has followed me across the seas, into prisons, everywhere. A little space still remains to me; I use it to record a rumour which was flying this morning about the town: Tartarin has ceased to live!

No news of him had come to us after his departure. I knew that he lived in Beaucaire near to Bompard, whom he assisted in taking care of the fair-grounds and the castle. Mere business of *regardelle*, both those occupations. Often and often, pining for my kind master, I have thought of going over to see him, but that devil of a bridge has always prevented me.

Once, looking towards the Castle of Beaucaire, at the top, quite at the top, I thought I could distinguish some one levelling a spy-glass at Tarascon. He had a look like Bompard. He disappeared into the tower, and then came back with another man, very stout, who seemed to be Tartarin. This one took the spy-glass, looked through it, and then dropped it, to make a sign with his arms as if in recognition; he was so far off, so small, so vague, that I did not feel the emotion I should have expected myself to feel.

This morning, in a state of distress without knowing why, I went into the town to be shaved (as I do every Sunday). There I was greatly struck by the appearance of the sky, which was veiled and

lurid, one of those skies without light which give a singular prominence to trees, houses, benches, roadways. I remarked upon it to Marc-Aurèle, the barber: —

"What a curious sun! there's no warmth in it, and it gives no light... Can there be an eclipse?"

"Why, yes, Monsieur Pascalon, did n't you know it?.. It has been announced in all the papers for the 1st of the month."

By this time he was holding me by the nose, his razor at my face, as he added: —

"And the news, I suppose you know it? Our great man is no longer in this world."

"What great man?"

When he named Tartarin, a little more and I should have cut myself with his razor.

"That's what it is to expatriate yourself!.. He could not live away from his own Tarascon."

Marc-Aurèle, the barber, did not know how true were his words. Without Tarascon, without his past glory, it was very certain that he could not live.

Poor kind master! poor great Tartarin!.. All the same, this coincidence ... an eclipse of the sun on the day of his death!

What a queer people we are! I will bet that all through this town the news gave pain to every one; yet they affected to take the thing very lightly. Because, ever since the affair of Port-Tarascon, which showed them so impulsive, so exaggerated, the Tarasconese are endeavouring to

appear sedate, masters of themselves and forever corrected.

The real truth is, that we are not corrected at all; instead of lying in one way we lie in another, that's all. We no longer say: "Yesterday, at the circus, there were fifty thousand persons, at least," we now say: "At the circus, yesterday, if a dozen persons were present, that's the very utmost."

Exaggeration all the same.

STUDIES AND LANDSCAPES.

NOTE.

THE following papers, originally published with "Studies and Landscapes," were transferred to "Letters from my Mill" in the edition of 1887: "The Stars;" "Custom-House People;" "The Oranges;" "The Locusts;" "In Camargue."

They are therefore included in "Letters from my Mill" in this edition of Daudet's works.

STUDIES AND LANDSCAPES.

I.

THE DEATH OF THE DUC DE M. . . .

HISTORICAL STUDY.

I HAVE never seen any one go out of life so stoically as this epicurean. It was a true departure of a man of the world, unexpected, rapid, discreet. Without wilting a flower on the grand stairways of the palace, without breaking a branch of the horse-chestnuts already green with their buds in the garden, disease came to him gently, politely, and in a few days all was over. No suffering whatever. In those luxurious rooms, which always had somewhat the appearance of a greenhouse, with their large windows facing the sun and the soft warmth of the hangings, he began, one early spring morning, to shiver. The doctors said, "It is nothing." The duchess as she passed threw him, with a puff of her cigarette, a short "You nurse yourself too much," sharp and light as the rustle of her silken drapery. He, without replying, drew closer to the fire, seeking the March sun which inundated the chamber; and there, already too feeble to go out,

he remained, shivering beneath his blue-fox furs, and listening to the distant roll of carriages and that incessant clarionet of the Port de la Concorde, the vicinity of which made him ever unhappy. Finally, his strength at an end, he took to his bed.

Then only did those about him begin to perceive the gravity of an illness so wary and so gentle. In the antechambers, on the stairways, the rumour spread. The doctors, now serious, consulted apart. The duke and the duchess alone suspected nothing. But one morning, as the duke awoke, he saw a slender thread of blood flowing from his mouth down his beard and slightly reddening the pillow-case. This delicate, this elegant being had a horror of all human ills, especially those of disease, which he now saw approaching him with its ugliness, its weakness, and that abandonment of the self which is like a first concession made to death. I was there. I caught the furtive, agonized glance, the look suddenly confused by a vision of the terrible truth. But, though he felt himself irrevocably doomed, he suffered no sign of it to appear. For some time longer he submitted without a word to the false smiles, the discordant gayeties by which a patient's pillow is surrounded. The vague encouragement of the doctors made him seemingly confident. But one evening he called to his bedside his safest and most intimate friend. "Tell me the truth," he said; "I am very low, am I not?"

"Done for, my poor Auguste."

In the first silence of that dreadful moment,

while we heard at the other end of the palace the smothered music of a little dance in the apartments of the duchess, all that held this man to life — power, honours, wealth, and splendour — must have seemed to him already afar off, about to vanish with his irrevocable past. What a wrenching from all things! To have had all, and to lose all! . . Instantly his course was taken. With eyes fixed on the limited and short time that remained to him to live, he applied himself to use that remnant well, and thought of nothing but the obligations of a death like his, which ought to leave no faithfulness unrewarded, nor compromise in any way a single friend. All the secret drawers were emptied into the fire, with their bundles of yellowed paper, their packets of perfumed letters adorned with coronets and monograms in tender colours, which burned up quickly like the ruffles of a ball-dress. Among them were the note of the adventuress beginning, "I saw you pass last evening in the Bois, Monsieur le duc," and the plaints of the deserted ones, and the still fresh ink of recent confidences. A great pink flame, and all were ashes, without the slightest fragrance of muff or boudoir.

Within the palace was felt already that vague disorder which foretells a complete upsetting. The gate was open; carriages rolled continually across the gravel of the court-yard as on reception evenings. The footmen wandered in groups along the corridors, in the salons, idle and gossiping, with their elbows on the marble mantels. Friends of the duke questioned one another anxiously;

the last-comers horrified and eager for news. Not a single indifferent person in that crowd. Those who were not stricken in heart were perhaps more feverish and uneasy than the rest. A whole world of ambitious and disappointed men were trembling before the crumbling away of hopes destroyed and projects to rebuild. What comedies in that drama! from the pillow of the dying man, where a valet — the man of the private life and all its secrets — came whining to beg the rolls of louis left lying in the drawers, to the antechambers where two great financiers, of the many whose fortunes the duke had made, stood talking in low voices, pitiably aghast, beside a large cage full of monkeys, whom the general disturbance excited and brought clinging to the bars with contortions and grimaces.

Finally came the honours of the last moment. First, the Archbishop of Paris, whom the worldly sceptic had consented to receive out of due regard for society; next, two great personages, before whom all present bowed and retired. The man approached the bed. The duke and he conversed in low voices. The woman knelt with the fervour of a Spaniard. . .

Now that all is done, his last hour consecrated, his last farewells said, the duke can die, — and he died.

I entered his room the next morning. That room, where so many ambitions had felt their wings expand, where so many hopes and discomfitures had palpitated, was now given over to the silence and

solitude of passing death. The duke was on his bed, his face rigid, aged, transformed by a beard which had sprouted gray in a single night. A priest, a nun, and that atmosphere of mortuary vigil in which are mingled the weariness of a waking night and the mumblings of the priest in the shadow. . .

The day was scarcely beginning, yet already beyond the green masses of the garden I could hear, far away, toward the Pont de la Concorde, the shrill jangle of the clarionet rising sharply above the noise of the carriages. . . I saw it later more lugubrious than ever, that chamber of death. The great windows were then wide open. The night and the wind from the garden were entering freely in a current of air. A white form lay upon a trestle. It was the body which had just been embalmed. The hollow head was filled with a sponge; the brain was in a bucket. The weight of that brain was truly extraordinary. It weighed . . . it weighed . . . the newspapers of the day gave the figures, but who remembers them to-day?

II.

A NABOB.

HISTORICAL STUDY.

WHO thinks of him still, that poor nabob? Who remembers even his name? That good, fat Kalmuck face, broad and puffy, always to be seen at first representations issuing from the shadow of a proscenium box, between two high, stout shoulders, is there a single Parisian who still remembers it? And yet his was one of the fashionable physiognomies during the last years of the empire, and you could not open a newspaper in those days without that plebeian and ostentatious name cropping up, surrounded by its millions as if by some fantastic halo. I have at this moment before my eyes an article by Jules Lecomte announcing in long dithyrambic paragraphs the arrival of the nabob in Paris. It is good to see with what vigour the Parisian chronicle of those days fired its salvos of honour for the gilded felucca coming from Orient laden with treasure.

The history of that fabulous wealth no one has ever known precisely. What was said of it resembles one of those old tales of the eighteenth century which told of Barbary pirates roving the Latin seas, of Beys, of renegades, of Provençal folk

brown as crickets, who always ended by wedding some sultana and "taking the turban," as the Marseillais say. Our nabob, however, had no need to take a turban to enrich him. He was contented to carry into those lands of indolence and torpor his activity, his suppleness, his intelligence — that intelligence of a Southern Frenchman — so that in a few years he made a fortune such as can be made only down there in those devilish hot countries, where all is gigantic, premature, disproportioned, where flowers grow and bloom in a single night, and a tree will produce a forest. The excuse for such fortunes lies in the uses to which they are put. Our nabob understood this; and his generosity, famous on the banks of the Nile, was excessive, like his wealth.

Unhappily, in Paris things are not as they are in the East. Being rich, men must know how to live and the ways of the world. If their surroundings are bad and the stream they are in is false, generosity becomes squandering, luxury bad taste, and all their incongruous splendours, ill-combined, resemble the costumes of Creole women, where the most authentic laces, the purest diamonds have an effect of tinsel and glass beads, through the oddity of their combinations. This is somewhat the history of our nabob. Arriving in Paris he settled himself on a grand boulevard scarcely laid out, in a superb suite of rooms, white and gold, with panelled walls and arches. It had the defect of being too new, and thus betraying a recently acquired fortune. Not a choice piece of furniture;

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ers. It was really curious to be present at one of his breakfasts. The guests all glanced at one another out of the corners of their eyes, ate feverishly, talked without thinking, each the victim of a fixed idea,— the idea of borrowing money. As soon as the last mouthful was swallowed the nabob no longer belonged to himself. Each guest was determined to get him alone. They snatched him, dragged him into corners, into the depths of isolated salons. But everywhere and always there was some indiscreet mirror reflecting the silhouette of the master of the house, struggling with his borrowers and exhibiting the vigorous pantomime of his broad back.

That back of his in itself was eloquence! Sometimes he would draw himself up with indignation: "No, no, it is too much," or else he would sink into comic disheartenment: "Well, well! if I must, I must." And thereupon the poor man was seen to write a line in pencil at the end of a table. After which, when he returned to the others, his intimates could detect in his benevolent big eyes an expression half humorous, half sad, which seemed to say, "Don't ever think it a light thing to be a nabob."

But these rebellions were of short duration; a moment later, in order to pay five hundred francs for a concert ticket that was not worth ten, he would pull gold from his pocket and bank-bills by the handful like a cattle-dealer; or he would write his name at the head of some good work opposite to a sum so extravagant that it showed more ignorance than vanity. The devil! these

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Here is an historical fact: men smoked in that house, during that year, twenty-five thousand francs' worth of cigars.

No matter! the good man was satisfied. His election went well, so well that when he reached the Chamber, rising from beneath the earth to the height of his budding hopes, he found a crowd of enemies, envious beings, disappointed borrowers, exasperated rivals. His life was ransacked and turned inside out like a glove. He was accused of having plied all trades, even the most shameful. One paper even went so far as to assert that he had kept a — how shall I say it? — what the Chinese call a flower-boat. This article, spread through the lobbies of the Chamber, caused a horrible scandal, the result of which was that the chairman of the committee on elections fulminated in open session of the assembly an appeal against the nabob's election. The unhappy man listened to the end, his eyes lowered, and without interrupting the speaker.

Then suddenly he rose, pale with indignation, and before those faces turned upon him, before those ironical smiles, this rustic, this parvenu, without education, unread, ignorant, with his Southern accent and the hoarse voice of a Rhone boatman, found words of such incomparable eloquence that Berryer — old Berryer, who was there, listening, in his nankeen waistcoat — may never in his life have uttered anything finer. It was ragged, untutored, savage, but at the same time so sincere that all who heard it were moved. How could

they fail to be in seeing a brave man struggling against the rising flood of hatred and calumny which surged around him with never a name or a face to which he could say, "You lie!" For myself, I shall never forget the tones of rage and of despair with which he cried out, clenching his fists: "Oh! messieurs, I have been poor; I knew what poverty was; but never could I have believed that wealth was far more terrible to endure."

If I have not retained his exact words, at least I give the impression of that supreme defence, to which the quivering of a voice unskilful in speech added honest and deep emotion. It was thoroughly understood, for thunders of applause burst forth from the Assembly. But the nabob's enemies were powerful. His election was declared void. This made him obstinate, and again he offered himself. In vain did he sow money, buy newspapers, and form partnerships in disastrous local enterprises; he was not re-elected. This was a frightful blow to him; it ruined his credit in the East and dried up the springs of his wealth. The fall of the empire completed his ruin; and then one day, poof! .. he plunged, and was never seen again.

Paris was indeed unjust to that man.

III.

MARI-ANTO.

STUDY OF A CORSICAN WOMAN.

"I AM quite willing to relate it to you," said Baron Burdet, laughing; "but I warn you that the thing is a little free, and before these ladies — However, I will try. If I go too far, stop me.

"Well, here I was, as I told you, appointed counsellor to the prefecture at Ajaccio. I arrived at my post rather disturbed in mind. It was my first start in the administration; besides which, the crossing, fifteen hours of a rough sea, the scowling aspect of that isle of Ithaca with its red rocks and its whirling gulls coming on top of two or three tales of bandits and vendettas related to me on board — in short, I was out of sorts on landing. What I heard at the prefecture completed my discouragement. Though alone with me in his cabinet, the prefect spoke the whole time in a low voice with an anxious air. 'Above all, be cautious, young man. You have come, for your start in this career, to a terribly dangerous region. The people are easily affronted, distrustful, and vindictive. If stilettos and carbines are less used than formerly, spies, denunciations, and anonymous letters swarm. Have no business with any one, no matter who.

Here there is no such thing as trifling business; everything is of importance. You squabble with a sardine-fisher; well! he 's a cousin of M. Bacciocchi, and there you are, with the whole empire on your back.' (This, I ought to say, was during the empire.) 'Look! you see that old gardener watering my yuccas and smoking his red clay pipe? Well! that 's the foster-father of the minister of the interior. You can imagine how I spare him. So, my dear counsellor, I warn you. Look well where you set your feet.'

"I left the prefecture more frozen than I was when I entered it. Nevertheless, once outside, the picturesqueness of the streets, the lemon trees in bloom, the sun, the sea, that glorious turquoise sky, and the pretty cigar-girls who work before their doors and laugh in the face of those who pass, soon dispersed all sorry impressions.

"Finding an abode was rather difficult. I was absolutely determined on having windows to the sea; but at Ajaccio, for some queer fancy, nearly all the houses turn their backs to it. I ended, however, by discovering at the farthest end of the town, in the house of a widow Perrini, two large furnished rooms which had a view of the gulf and its marvellous horizon of rocks, waves, and verdure. Landscape apart, the situation was not agreeable. To reach it I had to follow a bare and melancholy quay without a parapet, without lamps, and with a devil of a watering-trough, where the carters brought their animals to drink. At night when I returned from the club I had to feel my way to

the house through curses, blows of cudgels, and the prancing of wet mules. And what a house it was! — a vast barrack, painted, in the Italian fashion, green; lofty, cold, with stone floors everywhere, the silence and sonority of an old convent, and — to complete the gloom of the picture — that eternal Dame Perrini forever on the staircase, hugging the walls like a shadow in the long floating veil of a Corsican widow. Happily, I had my neighbour, Mari-Anto.

"This Mari-Anto (Maria Antonia was her real name) was the wife of a muleteer from Île Rousse who was nearly always away from home on his trips. She lived on the same floor as I. Pretty? well, not exactly; but young, slim, with a good walk, green eyes that looked at you mischievously, a mouth like a pomegranate, and here and there, in spite of the Madras handerchief which masked, in Moorish fashion, the upper and lower parts of her face, a few little freckles such as the sun will put on very fair skins. With an earthenware pitcher, or else a large basket full of loaves, on her head, she ran about, laughing, her bust thrown forward, her petticoat tight to the hips, and from every doorway they called to her, 'Mari-Anto! Ho! Mari-Anto!'

"Mari-Anto and I were very good friends. You may think, perhaps, that I did not keep up to my rank, but — propinquity, you know. And besides, connections are so difficult for a young man in those parts. My prefect had warned me. In Corsica there are plenty of young ladies to

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her, that Mari-Anto; but she never noticed it. I ought to say that I behaved with the utmost prudence, for I mistrusted the husband, a tall fellow I had taken note of, twice as broad and strong as myself, not to speak of five or six colossal brothers-in-law, who came to dine on Sundays, well-shaved, Roman noses, necks of young buffaloes, and curled like black Astrakan. Terrible men. The staircase shook as they mounted it.

"Once, however, when they were all on a journey I decided to pay Mari-Anto a visit. She did not seem surprised to see me. I sat down beside her and asked where her husband had gone. She pointed through the open window to a mountain on the other shore of the gulf, sending a kiss with her fingers in that direction. This was certainly not encouraging, but I launched myself all the same, and said in a voice of emotion, 'Oh! che mi piace Mari-Anto!' On which she withdrew the dry little brown hand I had taken, and running to a chest that stood near-by, she opened it, and returned to me with a huge triangular knife. 'Coltello del marito!' she said. I made her repeat it twice. It seems that the muleteer was frightfully jealous, and when any one paid court to his wife—with a terrible eye, raising on high the blade that gleamed, my angel made the gesture of stabbing me. I pretended to take it as a joke; but in fact I was greatly impressed, and that day we said no more. For some time after that there was no neighbouring; 'Good-morning! Good-evening!' on the staircase, and that was all.

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"'There, that's Mari-Anto,' she said to me, laughing. 'I'm the *pinsuto*. Presently, when my husband comes in he will find the *pinsuto* with Mari-Anto, and we shall see what he says.' Thereupon she sat down with her doll in her arms and began to kiss it and fondle it comically, imitating my accent and my intonations,—'Oh! che mi piace Mari-Anto!' and she laughed and laughed. As for me, I own that I did not laugh. I thought that for a carnival-hoax something better might have been invented, but I had no time to explain myself. The door below had opened. Heavy steps were shaking the staircase. 'My husband! go away!' said Mari-Anto, blowing out her candle; and in the chamber, now without light, there remained only a little counsellor of the prefecture seated in a streak of moonlight with Mari-Anto in his arms.

"Retreating to my room, I glued my ear to the partition and waited. Upon my word, my heart beat! — just as if I had been there myself in my embroidered coat.

"In spite of the darkness of the room the big muleteer must, on entering, have seen something or heard a stifled laugh, for he stopped short and muttered, 'Che cosa è?' I heard the scratching of a match against the wall, then a hoarse cry, an oath, rapid steps across the room and the noise of the chest being opened. Ah! my friends, *il coltello del marito!* It seemed to me that I could see it through the wall with its broad triangular blade — Br-r-r! Almost immediately an immense

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IV.

A THEFT.

STUDY.

WHO had put it there? Was it the devil to tempt me, or my mother to pay for the lesson of the music-master? Insoluble mystery. What is certain is that it was there on the mantelpiece of the salon, and that I saw it one Wednesday morning as I was starting for school. My first thought was not wicked. I said to myself out loud, "*Tiens!* forty sous!" It was a handsome coin, a little worn, the effigy rubbed down, and it shone softly on the crimson velvet of the mantel-shelf. Without thinking any harm, I took it in my hand to look at it closer. Instantly the magic of money operated. To the twelve or thirteen years that I then had, forty sous seemed a vast sum, and I felt, all of a sudden, as many desires tickling within me as there were little coins within that big coin, — in short, all the small change of a temptation I scarcely dared acknowledge to myself.

I thought: "How many boats could be hired with that!"

Boating was just then my great passion. To spend the whole afternoon on the black waters of the old port, among the fishing craft, in the steam

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of a child that I am telling you about, but the sensations of a criminal. Shaken by a dreadful struggle, my poor little body trembled. My ears hummed. I heard the beating of my heart like the monotonous tick-tack of the clock. At last, however, the idea of duty, already born and grown within me, the recollection of my family, the atmosphere of an honest home, and doubtless also the fear of punishment if discovered, — all that was stronger than the passion. I replaced the coin I had taken. Only — ah! I must tell all — only, by an instinctive, unreflecting impulse, but all the same a diabolical one, I pushed it under the clock, where it could not be seen and would surely be thought lost.

From that instant the theft was committed; aggravated, moreover, by cowardice and hypocrisy. I did not deceive myself. My indignant conscience rose straight before me and called me "Thief! thief!" so loudly that I fancied every one must hear it. At school it was impossible to study. In vain did I take my head in my two hands and glue my eyes upon the open book; I saw nothing but those vague shimmerings, those shattered prisms left in our eyes by some brilliant thing too fixedly looked at. Ah! yes, the crime was committed, for remorse had come. 'T was stricture of the heart, confusion, shame, the need to be alone. Now and then, struggling within me against that other reproachful self, I cried to it: "Be silent; I have done nothing; I am certain they will find it." And so saying I thought with satisfaction that the clock

was only wound every two weeks, and that no one entered our salon — a provincial salon, waxed, unused, and closed like a shrine — except on Mondays for my music-lesson.

That evening, on reaching home, my first care was to feel for the coin in the dim light of the salon. It was there. I had neither the courage to take it nor the greater courage of saying to my parents, "It is there!" Unquestionably, I was a thief.

That evening was spent in extreme agitation. I felt the coming Thursday — Thursday, holiday, boats! . . Over-excited to a sort of fever, I talked a great deal, and my voice had a false sonority which worried me. Two or three times my mother's eye, resting uneasily upon me, seemed to be asking, "What is the matter with him?" Then I blushed, as if every word I said was the lie of my thought. And with it all a submissive air, the coaxing ways of a guilty child who wants to be forgiven; but along with the caresses that my coaxing won was shame for my hypocrisy and a frantic desire to fall upon my knees and tell them all. — Nothing more.

That night, however, I slept pretty well, against my expectation. What a thing is that sense of impunity! Now that I was sure of being able to take that coin without danger, as every one thought it lost, my conscience left me in peace. I did nothing then but dream of my morrow's happiness; and between my half-closed lids I saw the masts in the harbour swaying to the tide, while farther along, at the end of the jetty, the sea, the full blue sea, im-

mense and travelled, smiled with its dimpling waves.

The next day, Thursday, directly after breakfast, I glided furtively into the salon. Before that mantelpiece I had one more terrible moment. People were talking in the next room; I was afraid lest some one should enter. How long I remained there, standing before my crime, putting forth my hand and then withdrawing it, I do not now remember. What I have never forgotten, however, is that child's face, livid, contracted, convulsed, which I saw in the mirror before me, looking with burning eyes into mine — the eyes of some wild animal on the watch. At last, the voices departed; I took the coin hastily and was soon out-of-doors.

It was a glorious Thursday, that is to say, a Sunday minus the melancholy bells, the sadness of the vesper hour, and the family promenades in our best Sunday clothes. Trembling in fear of recall, I sprang toward the quays in my haste to enjoy my theft. Sorrow to him who had stopped me then; for when you have just robbed how easy it must be to kill! As I ran, I heard that beautiful coin jingling joyously in my pocket against the two-sous piece which they gave me every Thursday; and its music made me tipsy and gave me wings. No longer a shadow of remorse. Light-hearted, smiling, my cheeks on fire, I was already in the atmosphere of my joy.

Suddenly, passing the portal of a church, the stretched-out hand of a beggar-woman stopped

me. Was I touched by that misery, by the pallor of that sunken face, or the mournful glance of the child which the poor woman held in her arms? Did I not rather yield to that instinctive need of doing good which seizes upon us after we have done evil? Or was it the superstition of a little Southerner, half Italian, thinking to sanctify his stolen money? However that may be, I took from my pocket my Thursday two sous and tossed them to the beggar, who thanked me with an expression of joy, of extraordinary gratitude, so extraordinary in fact that two streets farther on a sudden fear darted into my mind. Ah! *mon Dieu!* had I by chance—?

Quick I felt in my pocket, and howled with rage. I had given the two francs! Nothing remained to me but my two sous! And there were the boats close by. Already the masts and the yard-arms could be seen in a great square of light at the end of the street. No, you have never seen an anger, a despair like mine.

I returned upon my steps, furious, talking to myself. "Oh! I 'll find her—I 'll tell her I was mistaken—that the money was not mine. If she won't give it back I 'll have her arrested as a thief." I called her a thief; I had that impudence. . . Meantime, where had she gone? In vain did I seek in the church porches, and in the streets, and through the passages. No one. No sooner did she get the two francs than the beggar-woman returned to her home. Her day was finished at one stroke. And so was mine.

Then, aghast, not knowing what to do, I re-

turned to the house and springing to my mother's bosom with an explosion of tears, in which, however, there was more anger than remorse, I made up my mind to tell her all. It sometimes happens, they say, that a thief will confess to a crime in his wrath at having failed to commit it.

V.

THE BANDIT QUASTANA.

I.

"THE devil take picturesque prefectures," said Baron Burdet one day. "Nothing happens there as it does elsewhere, and, unless they are born to the region, public functionaries are liable to everlasting misadventures. For my part, if it was my business to write books, I could make a big volume of the administrative misfortunes that have happened to me alone, during the three years I spent in Corsica as counsellor to the prefecture. Here 's one among many, which I think will amuse you.

"I had just entered upon my functions at Ajaccio. One morning as I was at the club, delightfully plunged to the neck in Parisian newspapers, the prefect sent me by his valet a pencilled note: 'Come quick . . . I want you. . . We have the bandit Quastana!' I gave an exclamation of joy and hurried to the prefecture. I must tell you that under the Empire it was a very great affair to arrest a Corsican brigand. The 'Columba,' of M. Merimée had made them quite the fashion at the Tuileries, and when a prefect was clever enough to put his hand on some famous thicket-

rover he might be sure of promotion, especially if the journal of the prefecture presented the affair in a rather romantic light.

"Unfortunately, of late years bandits were becoming rare. Corsica, getting daily civilized was losing her vendetta traditions; and if, by chance, in some remote village of Sartena or the Île Rousse an aboriginal of hot blood still allowed himself to play with stilettos and carbines he soon went over to Sardinia and took good care to 'keep the thicket,' as they say over there. This, as you may well suppose, did not suit our prefect. No bandit, no promotion. Nevertheless, by dint of searching he had managed to discover one, — an old bully named Quastana, who, to avenge the death of his brother, had exterminated in course of time I don't know how many families. The affair went back to 1830 or 32. Since then, Quastana had lived hidden in the thickets, where, pursued, at first, with fury, he was finally forgotten. But he was always on his guard, and when, thirty years later, under my prefect the pursuit began again it was not more successful than formerly. From that time, however, the affair was desperate and perpetual between the brigand and the administration. On our side, we had the soldiery, the gendarmes, and the telegraph. Quastana had the peasantry, the charcoal-burners, and those impenetrable thickets of the Monte-Rotondo where the rock-pigeons only could follow him. At the prefecture we began to despair. Therefore you can imagine how that 'We have him' delighted me.

"I found the prefect in his cabinet, talking privately to a small man with cold and regular features, the expression of which remained impenetrable behind a thick black beard which hid his mouth. A true type of the Corsican peasant, with his woollen cap, the short hooded cloak of goatskin, and a pair of long scissors hanging to his belt, used by the peasantry to chop the leaves of the green tobacco into the hollow of their hands.

"'This is Quastana's cousin,' the prefect said to me in a low voice. 'He lives in the village of Solenzara above the Porto-Vecchio, and the bandit goes every Sunday evening to play *scopa* with him. Lately, it appears, they quarrelled over the cards, and to revenge himself this rascal now proposes to betray his cousin. Between ourselves, he looks to me sincere. But as I desire to make the arrest myself with as much show as possible, we must take precautions and not expose the government to a ridiculous and abortive expedition. That is why I have need of you, my dear baron. You are new to the region; no one knows you; and I wish you to go there and make sure *de visu* that it is really the true Quastana who plays cards on Sundays with this person.'

"'But I have never seen him, your Quastana.'

"The prefect opened a portfolio and took out a photograph, faded by the sun: 'There he is. He had the impudence to go and be photographed last year at Porto-Vecchio.'

"While we were looking at the intelligent and

clever face of the bandit, the other man came nearer to us, watching us from the corner of his eye. I saw, now and then, his lowered eyelids rise, and a brilliant glance shoot out like the flash of a stiletto, quickly blunted by an apparent indifference.

"'Are not you afraid,' we asked him, 'that the presence of a stranger might startle your cousin and prevent him from coming back on the following Sunday?' The man answered tranquilly: 'No, he is too fond of cards. Besides, we have new faces every day at Solenzara on account of the foundry. I shall say that this gentleman wants me to show him where to shoot ducks; it is just the season.' Thereupon we agreed on a rendezvous for the next Sunday evening at the inn of Solenzara, and he left us without seeming to be the least embarrassed by his villanous act. His back turned, the prefect gave me numerous cautions. 'Above all, my dear counsellor, not a word of this affair to a living soul—you understand me? not a living soul! This country is full of snares and traps. They'd get my bandit away from me; and I don't mean to share with any one the honour and profit of this pretty bit of work.' I assured him of my discretion, thanked him for his confidence, and we separated full of ambitious dreams, he believing himself already in the Council of State, I in a good little sub-prefecture in France.

"The next day, equipped as a huntsman from head to foot, I got into the diligence which plys from Ajaccio to Bastia, and went down the island

to its full extent. For those who love nature it is certainly a most charming and varied trip. One meets alternately olive groves as in Provence, pine forests, snow-peaks looking down on valleys almost as white as themselves with orange-trees in bloom. From time to time, the road, making a détour, lets you see between two rocks a blue horizon with the lateen sails of the coral fishers in the open sea, and cactuses defining their metallic leaves upon an African sky. But we of the government don't attach much importance to that sort of thing; and I own that being less concerned about the landscape than for my sub-prefecture, my eyes were closed for three-fourths of the way.

"At Bonifaccio, we stopped for breakfast. When I got back into the vehicle, my head a little warmed by a bottle of old *talano*, I found a travelling companion in the coupé. He was the assistant imperial attorney of Bastia, whom I had already met once or twice in the prefect's salon, — a good-looking fellow, about my age; Parisian, like myself, and sly! Ah! he proved that to me, the animal!

"Nowhere, as you may perhaps know, do the administration and the magistracy get on well together. In Corsica, less than elsewhere. The administration resides at Ajaccio, the magistracy at Bastia, and their hostility is increased by the rivalry of the two towns. But, bless me! two Parisians meeting together in exile have nothing to do with such local quarrels. They forget the region in which they are, and think only of the one they regret. In short, my magistrate and I,

we were soon great friends, and the *talano* having loosened my tongue I did not conceal, in the midst of our exile lamentations, that I hoped soon to return to France, thanks to the Quastana affair, about which I told him, under seal of the profoundest secrecy. What a fine thing is youth! By the time my new friend left the diligence at Porto Vecchio, we were already theeing and thouing each other.

II.

"THE little village of Solenzara, which I reached between five and six o'clock, lies around a splendid foundry standing close to the sea at the mouth of a narrow river. A population of workmen, fishermen, and custom-house officers occupy it in winter; but in summer malignant fevers force these poor people to emigrate two leagues higher up the mountain, and on the Sunday of my arrival the place was well-nigh deserted, except for its foundry, which never rests.

"In the empty village a little abbé — black against the setting sun — was trotting his slender shadow under shelter of a huge Brazilian hat like a parasol. Without knowing who I was, he came to me, backbone supple, obsequious, and he himself wearisome with polite speeches and offers of assistance. He wanted with all his might to take me to dine with him in his *précipitère*, as he said with a comical Italian accent.

"At first I attributed the eagerness of the holy

man to the joy he felt in meeting one living inhabitant in that deserted Solenzara; but the people of the inn, where I put up in spite of him, told me the secret of his persistency. The little abbé was a great gambler, and when he could inveigle any one into his *précipitère* the games of *scopa* were prolonged very far into the night. What of it? All Corsicans have the gambling disease. At Ajaccio, at Sartena, at Bastia the police are obliged to watch the clubs and the cafés. Young men ruin themselves at *bouillotte*. In the villages, the same thing. The peasantry are mad for cards. When they have no money, they gamble their sheep, their pipes, their knives, no matter what, provided they play, and always at *scopa*.

"The night came on, but Matteo — Quastana's cousin — did not come. I had dined, in the almost deserted inn, on a dish of *patelli* and a grill of kid, dry and carbonized, with a villanous *vin du pays*, smelling of goatskin, to wash them down. The few workmen of the foundry who took their meals there had departed, and I was beginning to find myself much embarrassed before the distrustful and inquisitive curiosity of the innkeeper, when Matteo at last appeared.

"'The man is at my house,' he said, putting his hand to his cap, 'if you choose to come.'

"Out-of-doors it was very dark. A great windstorm was driving the waves along the shore with the dull sound of wet sheets flapping as they broke. We walked for nearly a league along a pebbly path, the bed, in fact, of a dried-up torrent, full of

rounded stones which rolled beneath our feet. An abundant vegetation, left by the vanished water, choked up the path already narrow — gorse, mastic, and tufts of absinthe, the bitter odour of which was exhaled as we brushed it. I felt myself then in the heart of wild Corsica.

"'There is my house,' said Matteo, showing me a little light between the branches flickering like a glow-worm of a stormy evening.

"Just then a huge dog sprang from the darkness before us barking furiously. He seemed to be trying to bar our way.

"'Here, Bruccio! Bruccio!' cried Matteo, leaning towards me. 'That's Quastana's dog; terrible beast; has n't his equal for mounting guard. . . There, there! old Bruccio . . . do you take us for gendarmes?'

"The enormous brute calmed down and came and smelt of our legs. He was a fine newfoundland, with a perfectly white coat, woolly and thick, which had earned him the name of Bruccio (white cheese). He now preceded us with heavy gambols to Matteo's house, a species of stone hut with a hole in the roof which served for both chimney and window. Two cots took up most of the space within.

"On a rough table, surrounded by stools made of trunks of trees ill-cut and rugged, a *torchetto* in a wooden candlestick lighted the place with flickering flame, into which a cloud of insects were flying, singeing and burning their wings.

"Before the table a fine face, tanned and shaved

like an Italian or Provençal fisherman, was leaning over a pack of cards in the thick smoke of green tobacco.

"'Cousin Quastana,' said Matteo as we entered, 'here's a gentleman from the foundry who wants to hunt with me to-morrow. He'll spend the night here, so as to get into the woods at an early hour.'

"No man is pursued and tracked for thirty years of his life without a habit of distrust remaining with him. The small black eyes of the bandit buried themselves for a moment in mine. After which, satisfied no doubt by the examination, he made me a grand bow and paid no further attention to me. Besides, the *scopa* soon engrossed them both, his cousin and him. . . It was a true Corsican game, that silent *scopa*, underhand, astute, prying. I looked at the two players, seated opposite to each other, stealthy, watchful, their cards carefully hidden, spread out in a fan-shape on the table, then snatched up suddenly with a glance at the adversary that never left him. Old Quastana was particularly interesting to watch. The light fell full upon him. I recognized the photograph which the prefect had given me, the serge jacket, the high leather gaiters buckled above the knee. But what the photograph could not render was the rock-red colour of the face, the sun's stroke, as it were, upon a skin that was ever in the open air, the suppleness and vivacity of the motions, quite amazing in a man of his age. Then the voice, the hoarse, grating voice of men who live much alone,

the rust of whose habitual silence is disturbed by speech.

"Neither did Matteo lack in interest, seated tranquilly at the other side of the table opposite to the man he was about to betray. Not the slightest disturbance nor the least hesitation. I really believe that scoundrel had forgotten his treachery and thought only of the game, and that the result of their *scopa* was more to him than the result of his snare.

"One hour, two hours went by; I had trouble in keeping awake in the stifling atmosphere of the hut and the long silences of the game, broken only by monotonous exclamations: 'Déché setté! Déché otto!' From time to time the high wind without, the flaring of the lamp, or a dispute between the players compelled me to open my eyes. Suddenly the savage barking of Bruccio, an obstinate cry of alarm, brought us all to our feet. The old man made but one bound to the door, went out for an instant, and returned hurriedly. '*I pinsuti!*' he said, and jumping to his gun he sprang away like a cat. Matteo and I were still standing looking at each other when a dozen gendarmes, carbine in hand, filled the hut. 'Surrender!' And there we were, knocked down, searched, garroted. I tried to name myself, to say who I was. Nobody listened to me. 'Very good, very good, you can explain at Bastia.' And they drove us out with the butts of their guns, and bundled us down the descent with handcuffs on our wrists. At the bottom a cellular wagon which awaited us, a filthy

box without air and devoured with vermin, carried us at top-speed to Bastia, in the midst of a galopade of gendarmes and naked sabres. All that show of force to carry off a counsellor to the prefecture!

III.

"It was broad daylight when we reached Bastia. You can see from here the tableau of my entrance into the office of the House of detention, where the imperial solicitor-general, the colonel of gendarmerie and the prison director awaited with impatience the result of the expedition. The most astonished man of all was the corporal who had brought me triumphantly when he saw those gentlemen pressing round me and the imperial solicitor himself snatching off the handcuffs with all sorts of excuses.

"'What! is it you, Monsieur le baron! you that these idiots — But how did the mistake occur? what happened?'

"Then it was explained. The previous evening the solicitor-general had received a telegram from Porto-Vecchio, informing him of the presence of the bandit Quastana in the neighbourhood of Solenzara, with such minute details, so precise —

"That name Porto-Vecchio was a revelation to me.

"'Was it your assistant who sent you the despatch?'

"'Precisely. It was my assistant. A very serious

man, very trusty' (I knew something about that); 'a man not likely to send me frivolous information. . . But really, my dear counsellor, who could suppose that you would be hunting in these regions and be actually in the hut of our bandit's cousin? . . Well, we have made you pass a very bad night; but I am sure you have wit enough not to be angry, and you must prove it by coming to breakfast with me. . . Corporal, take off that man. I'll question him later.'

"The luckless Matteo was mute with stupor; but his glances at me were a protestation. I could not do otherwise than explain the matter squarely. Taking the solicitor-general apart I told him that Quastana's cousin was a spy of the prefecture, who had promised to deliver up to us the brigand — in short, the whole story. As I spoke, the face of the magistrate, lately so benevolent, resumed its mask of judicial coldness.

"'I am sorry for the prefecture,' he said in a curt little tone. 'But I hold Quastana's cousin, and I shall not let him go. He will be tried with two or three shepherds guilty of furnishing provisions and powder to that brigand. We must put an end to these criminal connivances which hamper the action of the laws.'

"'But I assure you, monsieur, that this man is an agent of the prefect — '

"'That's exactly why I keep him,' cried the magistrate, exploding. 'I mean to give a lesson once for all to the administration and teach it not to meddle in what does not concern it. . . What!

there 's only one bandit, one miserable bandit in Corsica, and you want to filch him from me! He is my game, mind! I ask you, Monsieur le conseiller, you who are a huntsman' (here a smile at my equipment) 'whether it is allowable, such conduct. . . I have told your prefect openly: "*I* shall capture Quastana, or no one shall do so." But he persists, obstinately. Very good; I 'll play him a trick of my own. His Matteo shall go to prison. Naturally the man will appeal to the prefecture; and as the affair will make a noise, the brigand will henceforth be on his guard against his cousin and the duck-shooters of the administration.'

"It was done as he said, that devil of a man. A month later, the prefecture was summoned. We were obliged, the secretary-general and I, to go and claim our spy, and to relate my adventure in open court. You can fancy how it amused the audience. A counsellor of the prefecture, travelling in a cellular wagon! In short, the administration was routed along the whole line. As for Matteo, the court of course acquitted him, as was just; but he was good for nothing to us now that Quastana was warned. He left the region soon after, to go, as they say down there, 'into railroads.' That 's the name the Corsicans give to the imperial police. To those poor devils, who have never seen an iron road, it means an occult, mysterious administration; and when you ask in families, 'Where is Allesandri? . . where is Bastelica?' that rather vague answer, 'He is gone into railroads' dispenses with further explanation."

VI.

DANGER.

STUDY.

"DON'T go *there* — there 's danger." Where is the child who, hearing those words, does not feel invincibly attracted to the dangerous place to which he is told not to go? That mere word "danger" makes his heart beat. He goes nearer, he roams round, he peers. "'T is there!" and down in the depths of his fear there is something that draws him on, fascinates him. It is the attraction of danger.

I remember that when I was quite a little fellow they took me sometimes to play in a large deserted park. At the farther end of that park under a tangle of briers and bushes was an old and very high terrace overlooking a little path through a wheat field. That little path tempted me. I wanted to jump down upon it from the terrace. But it was so high, so deep. I spent hours on that terrace, red and excited, saying to myself: "I will jump — I won't jump." At last one day I could not stand it any longer; I jumped and I hurt myself badly. But no matter for that! I was satisfied, and as if relieved of a heavy weight.

There is positively a great attraction in danger, and you are obliged to like it in spite of all. It is one of those strong sensations which lash you, shake you, and give you the measure of what you can do, and of what you are really worth.

The man who lives deep down within us and who is seldom seen, comes out in danger, is *unprisoned* by it. It breaks the dull conventions of life and the barriers with which we surround ourselves; and it alone — better than any republic — establishes clearly the idea of equality, fraternity, perhaps because it leads to the idea of death. Never have I seen such cordiality among men, an expansion so complete, as in presence of danger. It seems as if through the warmth of clasped hands the fever of courage were communicated; and we feel how much we need it.

But it is not to be denied that with this attraction of danger there always mingles, even in the bravest, a tightening of the heart, an apprehension, a motion backward, such as I made so often leaning over the terrace of the park — which made the jump more tempting every time. Habit alone can rid us of these attacks of weakness, but even so, the habit of a danger does not armour us or make us proof against any but that particular danger. At sea, in bad weather, when the sailors are about their work coolly, accustomed as they are to the scream of the wind and the dash of the waves, an old trooper coming from a hundred battles will turn pale and shudder, without being a coward for all that. *He* is inured to shells and balls. He is

used to the idea of dying stretched out on a field or the edge of a ditch; but to die drowned, to struggle in that whirling mass of foam and green waves! . . If they would only let him handle the ship, or put him at a pump or a windlass. But no! he must stay where he is, on the poop, useless and motionless before an unknown danger. It is terrible.

I speak, perhaps, like the Southerner that I am, but it seems to me that stirring, bustling, moving about, surrounding one's self with gestures and words lessens the sense of danger. The officer who leads his men under fire with voice and sword uplifted: "Forward, S. . . N. . . de D. . . !" has, in my opinion, less difficulty in being brave than the poor line fellow, silent and automatic in the ranks. In heartening his soldiers he heartens himself.

Oh! that little shudder, that breath of danger when it comes, who has not known it once? It passes like a shadow over the face. At the same time the gestures become firmer, more inflexible. The man gathers himself together; he is ready. Attention, here we are! . . Then indeed it is well to look around us, for the effects of danger are curious to observe. On each individual they show differently. There are some who chatter and seem unable to retain their words. Others, on the contrary, clench their teeth and retire within themselves. Beside those who laugh nervously, there are those whom such gayety irritates and who think it "stupid to laugh in that way." As the

danger comes nearer the pallid features are drawn by a concentration of the whole being. The eyes dilate, the voices change their pitch. You will hear head-voices, wan, hollow, which seem as if they spoke from a nightmare.

But it is not only human beings whom danger metamorphoses. In its very atmosphere there is a species of sonority, an astonishing void; all is sensitive, everything vibrates. The landscape itself seems attacked, changed, developed on its melancholy side. In full sunlight the sensation of danger will suddenly give the impression of falling day, of a paling of light. The sky becomes dramatic, Nature is enlarged. Some of us can render an account of this to ourselves, we who during the time of the siege took part in the skirmishes in the environs of Paris. That familiar region, the railway stations, the banks of the Seine or the Marne, the slopes of which are worn by the feet of promenaders, gave us then the impression of an unknown, or rather a transfigured land. The tavern signs had a forbidding look. It was not merely the barricades, the earthworks, the broken bridges, the ditches of the *grand'garde* which gave a new aspect to everything. It was the atmosphere of danger.

Only the other day I found myself once more in a little corner of the Marne, where I had, during the war, five minutes of real danger, of strong emotion. The reeds at the river's edge, a new white wall all peppered with balls like the target of a shooting gallery, a ruined cook-shop with its trellised arbour covered with vines, all this had stayed in my eyes,

graven there in a second by that keen vision that we have of things in moments of peril; and yet the other day I could scarcely recognize the place.

It was certainly the same ruin, the same little white wall full of holes, but there were no Saxons ambushed on the other side of the river, and danger having departed, that shore which had seemed to me so grand, so dramatic, now looked like a mere little corner of the Parisian landscape, very bourgeois, very common of a gala Sunday.

My friends, hurrah for danger! There is nothing like it for tempering souls. If the strongest have a shudder at its approach, what marvellous warmth it leaves within our being when it departs. After that call on all our living forces, what expansion, what relaxing of the whole system! How we laugh! how glad we are in living! It is the reaction to a clear fire brightly flaming after a long cold road.

I never felt it so much, that delightful reaction, as I did one Sunday afternoon on entering the harbour of Bonifaccio. We had had two days of stormy weather, wind, high seas, broken masts, and hold full of water. 'T was a miracle we ever came safely out of it.

Therefore, how beautiful the little harbour seemed to me with its sleeping waters between two faces of smooth black rock. Within it a quay all sunlight, the houses on the "Marina," and a pebbly road leading up into the town. Far above, an old church, built by the Templars on a

broad platform which commanded the whole horizon. We arrived in port just as vespers were over. . . It seemed to me that in my life I had never breathed so freely. Nothing was to be seen around us but the sea white with foam, the coasts of Sardinia, and the straits flowing in the vivid sunlight. We listened to the noise of the waves with wonder at not feeling their assault; and the wind passed by us still furious and raging while we leaned tranquilly from the platform. . . I shall never forget that Sunday afternoon, nor the singular delight I felt in listening to the litanies which a brotherhood of old Bonifacians, swathed in sombre mantles, were reciting as they marched round the church, black as swallows against the blue horizon. After the tumult and anxiety of the storm, that calm, these chants, and this warm sun! . . I felt, as it were, an overplus of joy, of life, an enlargement of the horizon of my whole being — the adorable sensation of danger past.

VII.

PARISIAN WAYS.

I.

THE MONKEY.

SATURDAY, pay night. At the close of this day which is also the end of the week, one already feels the coming of Sunday. All along the faubourg are shouts, calls, hustling at the doors of the wine-shops. Through the crowd of workmen who overflowed the sidewalk and followed the broad descending roadway, a little shadow hurried furtively along, mounting the incline in the opposite direction. Wrapped in too thin a shawl, her wan little face inclosed in too large a cap, she had a shamed look, miserable, and so distressed! Where is she going? What is she seeking? In her hurried walk, her fixed look, which seemed to make her go faster still, were the anxious words: "If I only could get there in time!" Men turned as she passed, and jeered. The workmen all knew her and greeted her ugliness with an ugly name: "*Tiens!* the monkey;" "Valentin's monkey after her man." And they spurred her on — "Pst . . . pst . . . will find, won't find." Listening to nothing, on she went, breathless, panting, for that

street which leads to the barriers is very steep to mount.

At last she arrives. It is quite at the top of the faubourg, at the corner of the outer boulevard. A great manufactory. They are just in the act of closing the doors. The steam of the machines turned into the rivulet hisses as it escapes with the sound of a locomotive. A little smoke is still rising from the tall chimneys, and the hot atmosphere that floats above the deserted buildings seems the respiration, the very breath itself of the toil that has just ended. Everything is now extinguished, except a solitary little light still shining from the ground-floor behind an iron lattice; it is the lamp of the cashier. But now it disappears, — just at the moment when the woman arrives. Ah! 'tis too late. The payments are over. What will she do now? Where can she find her husband, to wring the week's money from him and keep him from drink? There is such need of money in the house! The children have no stockings. The baker is not paid. She sits down exhausted on a stone post, looking vaguely into the darkness and having no longer the strength to move.

The wine-shops of the faubourg are overflowing with noise and light. The life of the now silent manufactories is pouring into these dens. Through their clouded windows, where bottles in rows mingle their treacherous colours — the venomous green of absinthe, the pink of bitters, the spangled

gold of Dantzig brandy — shouts, songs, the jingling of glasses reached even to the street, together with the tinkling of money thrown upon the counter by hands still black with having earned it. Weary arms rested on the tables, motionless with the stupefying effect of fatigue; and in the unwholesome heat of the place all these miserable fellows forgot there was no fire in the home, and that wife and children were cold.

Before the low windows, the only lighted windows in the now deserted streets, a little shadow passes and repasses timidly. Seek, seek, poor monkey! She goes from one wine-shop to another, leans down, wipes the corner of a pane with her shawl, looks in and then departs, still uneasy, feverish. Suddenly she quivers. Her Valentin is there, in front of her. A tall devil, i' faith! well set-up, in a white blouse, proud of his curly hair and his style of a workman dandy. Men surround him, listen to him. He talks so well; besides, 't is he who pays. During this time the poor monkey who stands without is shivering, gluing her face to the panes where, in a great gleam of gas, the table of her drunkard is reflected, covered with bottles and glasses, and also the exhilarated faces that surround it.

In those panes the woman looks as if seated in the midst of the party like a reproach, a living remorse. But Valentin does not see her; caught and absorbed by interminable tavern discussions, renewed with each glass and almost as

pernicious to the reason as the adulterated wines, he does not see that little, drawn, pale face that is making signs to him beyond the panes, those poor sad eyes that are seeking his. She, on her part, dares not enter. To seek him among his comrades would be to affront him; if she were pretty, indeed, but she is so ugly.

Ah! how fresh and pretty she was when they first knew each other ten years ago. Every morning when he started for his work he met her going to hers, poor, but honourably decking her poverty, coquettish after the fashion of that strange Paris where ribbons and flowers are sold under the black arches of *portes-cochères*. They loved each other at once as their eyes met; but having no money they were forced to wait long to be married. At last, the mother of the lad gave a mattress from her bed, and the mother of the girl did as much; and then, as the little one was much beloved, a collection was taken up in the workshops, and the new household was ready.

The wedding-gown was lent by a friend, the wedding veil hired for the occasion, and they started one morning on foot through the streets to be married. At the church they had to wait for the end of a funeral mass; and wait also at the mayor's office till all the rich marriages were over. After which he took her to the upper end of the faubourg, into a gloomy tiled chamber at the end of a long passage full of other rooms, noisy, dirty, and quarrelsome. It was enough to disgust her at once with her

home. Consequently, their happiness lasted but a short time. By dint of living among drunkards, he took to drinking like the rest. She, seeing the women about her weep, lost courage; and while he was in the wineshops she was spending all her time among the neighbours, apathetic, humiliated, rocking with interminable complaints the child in her arms. That is how she became so ugly that the horrid name of "monkey" was given to her in the workshops.

The little shadow is still there, going and coming before the panes. She is heard walking slowly in the mud of the sidewalk and coughing a deep hollow cough, for the night is cold and rainy. How long will she wait? Two or three times she has put her hand on the button of the door, but she does not dare to open it. At last, however, the thought that the children have nothing to eat stands her in place of courage. She enters. But hardly has she crossed the threshold when a great burst of laughter stops her short. "Valentin! *v'la le singe!* here's your monkey!" She is very ugly, it is true, with her rags all dripping with rain and the pallor of waiting and weariness on her cheeks.

"Valentin, here's your monkey!" Trembling, speechless, the poor woman stands without moving. He, furious, springs up. What! she dares to come seeking him there, to shame him before his comrades? Wait, wait, you'll see — and terrible, with clenched fist, Valentin springs towards her. The poor creature saves herself by flight amid

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They walk
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Then the great green doors, dumb and mysterious, whence escape — when they are opened — puffs of stern or weeping voices, glimpses of desks like a school, and raised platforms black with caps, and large crucifixes hanging above them. Muskets ring upon the paved floors; a threatening roll of vehicles passes, shaking the roof. All these noises blend like the breathing, the pulsation, of a manufactory, while justice functions. And to hear it function, that terrible machine, makes one long to hide, to grow tiny, for fear of being caught, if only by a hair, in that formidable gearing, knowing it to be so complicated, tenacious, blasting.

I was thinking all this the other morning as I went to see an examining judge to whom I wanted to commend a poor devil. The hall of witnesses, where I waited, was full of people. There were ushers, and clerks engrossing documents behind a glass screen, persons summoned who were mumbling to themselves their testimony, women of the people excited and gabbling who related to the usher their whole lives to come at the affair which brought them there. Close beside me an open door lighted the corridor of the judges, a gloomy corridor that leads everywhere, even to the scaffold, and through which the arrested person issues a culprit. Some of those unfortunates, brought under strong guard by the staircase of the Conciergerie, were lolling on benches while awaiting their turn to be examined; and it was here, in this antechamber of the galleys, that I overheard a dialogue between lovers, a faubourian idyll, as

passionate as the *oarystis*, but more heart-breaking Yes, in these shades, where so many criminals hav left their shudders, their hopes, their furies, I sa two beings love each other, smile to each other; an low as that love was, wan as the smiles were, tha old corridor must have been as astonished as som filthy Parisian street if a ringdove cooed there.

In a listless attitude, almost unconscious of her self, a girl was sitting at the corner of a bench tranquil as a workwoman awaiting her pay. She wore the coloured cotton cap and the sad uniform of Saint-Lazare with an air of rest and health, as if the prison regimen was the best thing she had ever met with in life. The guard who stood beside her seemed to find her to his liking, and they laughed together quietly. At the other end of the corridor, quite in shadow, sat, with manacles on his wrists, the Desgrieux of this Manon. She did not see him at first; but as soon as her eyes were used to the gloom she cried out: "Why, it's Pignou! Hey! Pignou!"

The guard made her hush. It is expressly forbidden to allow the prisoners to talk to one another.

"Oh! I beg of you, only one word!" she said, leaning forward toward the end of the corridor. But the soldier was inflexible. "No, no, it can't be allowed; but if you have something to say to him, tell me, and I will repeat it to him."

Then a dialogue began between the girl and her Pignou with the guard for interpreter.

With much emotion, and no regard whatever to

Velvet cap, grizzling whiskers, thin lips, and cruel, scrutinizing, distrustful eye, but penetrating, he was the type of an examining judge, one of those men who think they have always a criminal before them, like the physicians of insane asylums who see nothing but maniacs everywhere. This particular judge had a certain way of looking at you so embarrassing, so insulting, that you felt yourself guilty without having done any wrong. With one glance he terrified the whole corridor. "What is the meaning of such a racket? Try to do your duty better," he said to the guards, and he shut his door with a slam.

The guard caught in a fault, red and ashamed, looked round for a moment to see whom he could blame. But the girl said no more, and Pignou kept quiet on his bench. Suddenly, however, he noticed me, and as I was close by the door of the waiting-room, almost into the corridor, he took me by the arm and pulled me round brutally. "What are you thrusting your nose into, you?" he said.

III.

THE PHOTOGRAPHER.

As they seemed to be a poor little household and their furniture was all upon a hand-cart, they were made to pay their rent in advance, — the rent of a top-storey, the fifth in a quite new house on a great unfinished boulevard, covered with placards, plaster rubbish, and empty lots closed in

with boards. A smell of paint was in the three small rooms, very dazzling with a straight light that brought out the bareness of the white walls. First came the studio with its broad window like a bell-glass, its Prussian stove, gloomy and cold with a little coke fire laid, but not to be lighted until clients came. The photographs of the family are hung upon the walls: father, mother, and three children, seated, standing, interlaced, separate, in all possible poses; then buildings, and rural scenes gleaming in sunlight. All these dated from the time when they were rich, and when the father did photography for amusement. Then ruin came, and having no other trade at command, he tried to make one out of his Sunday pastime.

The apparatus, which the children regard with awestruck admiration, occupies the place of honour in the middle of the studio, and its sparkling new brasses, its large clear lens, appear to have absorbed all the luxury and splendour of the poor little home. The rest of the furniture is old, broken, worm-eaten, and so little of it! The mother wears a shabby black-silk gown, a bit of lace on her head, — the dress of a counter to which customers seldom come. The father, however, has afforded himself a fine artist's cap, and a velvet jacket to impress the minds of the bourgeoisie. Beneath this shining array he himself, with his broad moonlight forehead, full of illusions, his astonished, innocent eyes, looks as new as the apparatus. And how he fidgets, poor man! How seriously he takes himself! It is worth while

to hear him say to the children: "You must never enter the dark room." The dark room! to hear him you would think it the lair of a pythoness.

At heart the poor fellow is much troubled. The rent paid, the wood and the coal, and there is not much left in the drawer. If clients do not come, if the show-case down below at the door does not catch some bird of passage, what will the little ones eat to-night? Well, let us trust in God. The settling-down is over. There is nothing more to prepare, or to polish; all must now depend on the passer in the street.

Minutes of waiting, of anguish. Father, mother, children, they are all upon the balcony, watching. Among so many persons circulating about there must surely be an amateur. The devil! no. The crowd comes and goes, passing one another on the sidewalk. No one stops. Stay! yes. There 's a gentleman gazing into the show-case. He looks at the portraits one after another; he seems pleased; he 'll be coming up. The children, enthusiastic, talk of lighting the fire, "Wait," says the mother, prudently. And how wise she was! The gentleman continues his way; he is only idling. One hour, two hours. The light is less clear. Heavy clouds are passing. Nevertheless, at this height excellent pictures could be taken. But what good is that if no one comes? At every instant emotions, false joys, steps heard on the staircase, coming close to the door, then suddenly departing. Once some one rang. He was look-

ing for the former tenant. The faces grow long; the eyes fill with tears. "Can it be," says the father, "that some one has unhooked the sign? Run down and see, little one." A minute more and the child returns in consternation. The sign is there. No one has paid attention to it.

Moreover, it rains. In fact on the glass roof of the studio the rain is falling with a mocking sound. The boulevard is black with umbrellas. The family come in from the balcony and shut the window. The children are cold, but they dare not light the stove which holds their last bit of coke. General consternation. The father walks up and down, his fists clenched. The mother hides in the chamber lest they should see her weep. Suddenly one of the children, who had taken advantage of a gleam of sunshine to run out on the balcony, tapped hastily on the window. "Papa, papa. . . There's some one down there at the show-case." He was not mistaken. It was a lady, a very nice lady, i' faith! She looked a moment at the photographs, hesitated, raised her head — Ah! if all the pairs of eyes that were levelled upon her from above had a scrap of magnet in them how she would have rushed up that staircase four steps at a time!

At last the lady decides. She enters, she comes up. Here she is. Quick, put a match to the fire and the children in the side room. And while the father settles his cap becomingly, the mother runs to open the door, smiling, agitated, with a modest rustle of her old silk gown.

"Yes, madame, this is the place." Eagerly they invite her to sit down. She is a Southern woman, rather talkative, but very kind and not chary of her profile. The first attempt is a failure. "No matter, try again, *té! pardi!*" And without the least ill-humour the Southern lady puts her elbow once more on the table and her chin in her hand. While the photographer arranges the folds of the gown, the ribbons of the bonnet, smothered laughs are heard and a commotion behind the little glass door. It is the children, jostling one another to see their father put his head under the green cloth of the apparatus and stand there, without moving, like the Beast in the Apocalyse with one great shining eye. Oh! when they grow up they will all be photographers. At last here's a good picture, which the artist produces in triumph, all dripping. The lady recognizes herself in the white and black patch, orders a dozen cards, pays in advance, and departs enchanted.

She is gone, the door is closed. *Vive la joie!* The children, set free, dance round the apparatus. The father agitated by his first operation, wipes his brow majestically; then, as daylight is coming to an end, the mother goes out hastily to buy some dinner (a good little extra dinner in honour of the house-warming), and also — for one must have method — a large register with a green back, in which is inscribed the date, the name of the Southern lady, and the sum earned: Twelve francs! It is true that, thanks to the *pâté de Saint-Honoré* with which they celebrated the day, thanks

also to certain little provisions of firewood, sugar, candles, the total of the expenses was exactly that of the receipts. But what of that? If you can make twelve francs on a rainy day imagine what you will make on the morrow. The whole evening was spent in projects. It is incredible how many projects can be got into a little apartment of three rooms on a fifth storey!

The next day, splendid weather, and nobody. Not a client all day. But what do you expect? That is business, you know. Besides, a bit of the *pâté* was left, and the children did not have to go to bed with empty stomachs. The following day, nothing. The watch from the balcony was keener than ever, but unsuccessful. The Southern lady came for her dozen, and that was all. That evening, in order to get bread they had to pawn a mattress. . . Two days, three days went by. Now came real distress. The luckless photographer sold his cap and his velvet jacket; nothing remained but to sell his apparatus and find a place in some establishment as shopman. The mother was in despair. The children, quite disheartened, would not even go out upon the balcony. Suddenly, of a Saturday morning, just as they least expected it, the bell rang. 'T is a wedding party, a whole wedding party, which has mounted the five flights to be photographed. The bride, the bridegroom, the bride's-maid and groomsman, worthy souls who, never having worn but one pair of gloves in their life, are bent on having that memory perpetuated. This day brought thirty-six

francs. The next day, double. That settles the matter. The photographic establishment is launched... Now, that is one of the thousand dramas of the minor trades of Paris.

IV.

PÈRE ACHILLE.

MID-DAY was ringing from the factory bells. The great silent court-yards were filling with noise and movement.

Mère Achille left her work at the window where she had been sitting, and began to lay the table. Her man would be up presently for breakfast. He worked close by, in one of those great glazed workshops, which we see encumbered with piles of wood and where the saws are grating from morning till night. The wife went and came from the chamber to the kitchen. Everything was neat and shining in this workman's home. Only, the bareness of the two little rooms is more perceptible in the strong light of a fifth storey. From them were seen the tree-tops, with the Buttes Chaumont beyond; and here and there, tall brick chimneys, blackened at the top and always active. The furniture was waxed and rubbed; it dated from the time of the marriage, together with the two bouquets of glass flowers which adorned the fireplace. Nothing had been bought since then, because, while the wife drew her needle courageously at

home, the husband spent his time without. All that she could do was to be industrious and take good care of the little they had.

Poor Mère Achille! *one more* full of household griefs! The first years, particularly, were very hard. Husband a rover, drunken, no children, obliged by her business as a dressmaker to live shut up in the monotonous order of a house without children, where there were no little hands to tangle her thread, nor any little feet to kick up a dust and a pretty racket. It was this especially which distressed her. But as she was very courageous, she consoled herself with work. Little by little, the regular motion of the needle soothed her grief, and the inward satisfaction of work accomplished, of a minute of repose at the end of a hard day's labour, took the place in her life of happiness. Besides, as Père Achille grew older, he had greatly changed. He still drank more than his thirst required; but he went back fresh to his work. It was noticed that he was beginning to fear her a little — that brave woman who treated him with the tenderness and the severity of a mother. When he was drunk, he no longer beat her, and even, from time to time, as if ashamed of the sad youth he had made her pass, he took her of a Sunday to the "Lilas," or to Saint-Mandé.

The table is laid, the room in order. A knock at the door. "Come in!" The key is in the lock outside. Some one enters, but it is not he. It is a tall, handsome young fellow of twenty, in a workman's blouse. Mère Achille has never

seen him, and yet to her eye there is something in the expression of that frank young face that she seems to know intimately, and it troubles her.

"What is it you want?"

"Père Achille is not at home?"

"No, my lad, but he will be soon. If you have anything to say to him you can wait."

She draws up a chair; then, as she never remains inactive, she begins once more to sew by the window. The man who has just entered looks with curiosity around the room. He sees a photograph on the wall; gets up and examines it attentively. "Is that Père Achille, there?"

The wife is surprised. "Then you don't know him?"

"No, but not for want of wishing to do so."

"What is it you want of him? Have you come for money? I thought he owed money to no one; we have paid all."

"No, no, he owes me nothing. Though that 's rather singular, too; because he is my father."

"Your father?"

She rose quite pale, her work slipping from her hands.

"Oh! you must know, Mère Achille, it is not to affront you that I say that; I was born before your marriage. I am the son of Sidonie; you may have heard tell of my mother."

In truth, she knew the name. At the beginning of her marriage it had made her unhappy. They told her that Sidonie, an old flame of her husband,

was a very pretty girl, and that together they had made the handsome couple of the neighbourhood. Such things are hard to hear.

The lad continued: —

"My mother is a good woman, I can tell you! At first I was put in the Foundling, but when I was ten years old she took me home. She worked hard to bring me up and give me a trade. . . Ah! I have no blame to put upon *her!* My father, he, that's another thing. But I didn't come here for that. I came only to see him, to know him. The fact is it has always worried me not to know my father. When I was quite little it worried me, and I have often made my mother cry with my questions: 'Haven't I any father?' 'Where is he?' 'What does he do?' One day she told me the truth, and I said at once: 'He is in Paris, and I am going to see him.' She tried to prevent me. 'Don't I tell you he is married, and you are nothing to him; he has never inquired, or done anything for you. . .' But I wanted with all my might to know him, and as soon as I got to Paris, having his address, I have come here at once. You mustn't be angry with me, it was stronger than I."

Oh! no, she is not angry! But in the depth of her heart she is jealous. She thinks, as she looks at him, of the strange ill-luck of life; he ought to have been hers, that child. How she would have cared for him and brought him up. . . He was really, to tell the truth, the image of Achille; only with a bolder air; and she could not help think-

ing that a son of hers — that son so longed for — would have had something more staid, more honest, in his look and voice.

The situation was a little embarrassing. They were both silent, thinking each their own thoughts. Presently steps sounded on the stairs. It was the father. He entered; tall, bent, with the dragging step of the workman who spends many Mondays idling in the streets.

"See, Achille," said the wife; "here is some one who wants to speak to you;" and she went into the other room, leaving her husband and Sidonie's son alone together. At the first word Achille's face grew long; the son reassured him. "Oh! you know, I have not come to ask for anything; I don't need help from any one to support myself. I merely came to see you, nothing more."

The father stammered, "No doubt, no doubt — You are — you did very right, my boy."

Nevertheless, this sudden paternity embarrassed him, especially before his wife. He looked towards the kitchen and said, lowering his voice: "Let us go downstairs; there's a wineshop below, and we can talk better. . . Wait for me, mother; I'll be back."

They went down and established themselves before a bottle, and began to talk.

"What do you do?" asked the father; "I am a carpenter."

The son answered, "I am a cabinet-maker."

"Is business good your way?"

"No, not very."

And the conversation continued on that tone; a few details of their trades were the only points they had in common. Not the faintest emotion in seeing each other. Nothing to say, nothing. Not a memory in common; two lives utterly separated, which had never had the slightest influence the one upon the other.

The bottle finished, the son rose. "Well, father, I won't detain you longer; I have seen you and I go away content. Au revoir."

"Good luck to you, my boy."

They shook hands coldly. The son went his way; the father went home; they never saw each other again.

VIII.

STUDY OF A COMEDIAN.

THAT evening young Bloncourt made his début in "Chatterton." The play, not forgotten, but slumbering for some years, withdrawn to the pages of a book, had all the novelty of a first representation. Those who knew it but had never seen it played were present with curiosity at this stage efflorescence of the work, in which certain beauties, especially the refinements, disappeared, were dispersed, volatilized, so to speak, by the heat of the footlights, while others shone forth unexpectedly in the motions of voice and gesture. Those who had been present at former representations were delighted to recover two hours of their youth, an aftermath of earlier artistic emotions. In short, this fine old drama, coming amid the banalities of the period, rejuvenated and enraptured the whole audience.

It must be said that no more seductive Chatterton could be imagined than young Bloncourt. Son and grandson of comedians, the young man has the blood of great artists in his veins, and was determined on proving it to us that evening.

In the tumult of applause, amid all those pairs of eyes, those hands stretched out toward the stage,

I saw from time to time a fine and motionless face issuing from the shadow of the passages, pale in the light of the lustres. It was Bloncourt the father, who had come to witness the triumph of his son. Deeply agitated, he changed his place often, appearing on all the tiers of the theatre; sometimes in the splendour of the boxes, sometimes in the confusion of the galleries; as if he wanted to measure, to see under all its aspects, a success that was partly his own. The audience recognized and pointed him out. People said: "Look at Père Bloncourt. Does n't he look happy?" And sometimes those who applauded turned toward him as if they wished to make this great artist share in the triumph of his child and pupil.

The fact is, there is no fame so brief as that of comedians. When they cease to act it ends. The public no longer concerns itself with them. They have the fate of the spoken word, which, however beautiful it be, the breeze wafts away; of the musical note, that vanishes as soon as the sound is given. But in this case, thanks to his son, old Bloncourt was now to escape the terrible destiny of great comedians. He saw a new glory issuing from his past glory; he was beginning at the end of his artistic life another life full of hopes. The poor man's emotion was great. He had, as he listened, nervous motions, a quivering of the lips. Between the acts he roamed the corridors and listened to the groups; and when, with a grasp of the hand, congratulations were offered to him, he blushed, and slipped away with the modesty

of a débutant, a paternal modesty that was truly touching.

Passing beside him at one of these moments I could not resist an impulse of sympathy in that silent joy.

"You must be very happy," I said to him, pressing his hand. "It is a great success."

I felt a cold hand, covered with sweat, which he withdrew hastily, almost angrily. The man had a dreadful smile as he looked at me.

"What! you too—you congratulate me? . . Is there no one to understand what I suffer? Ah! I am suffocating. Let us go out."

And he dragged me outside.

An icy wind was blowing beneath the arcades, but the old comedian did not mind it. "Ah! it is good—it is good!" he said, drinking-in the air with eagerness. "I thought I was going mad in there. For two hours that I have been listening to that applause these imbecile congratulations seem to me a sarcasm. Does that surprise you—what I am saying? Well, yes! I am jealous. I am jealous of that child who is mine; jealous enough to die of it, there! . . Dreadful, is it not? . . But why did he steal my rôle. It is *I* who ought to play it, that part. It is mine; Vigny promised it to me. Eight days before he died he said to me: 'Bloncourt, when they again bring out "Chatterton" I count on you.' And you can think with what impatience I have waited for it. It is so long since I have acted that Paris was beginning to forget me. I hoped that this creation would give me

another youth, a renewal of success. Night and day I studied. I found new things. I was ready. And then, one morning, the young one came to the house and fell upon my breast. 'Ah! father! I am so happy — I am to play "Chatterton."' He knew well, better than any one, the promise that had been made to me; but in his joy he never thought of that. Children are so selfish in their happiness. This one gave me a great stab with a laugh. He told me they did first think of me for the part, but afterwards thought me too wrinkled for the part. Too wrinkled! There 's enough to make any man old with such deceptions in his life. I am sure that in five minutes I had the wrinkles of twenty additional years on my face. . . If the young one had only uttered one word of regret or tenderness I would have said to him simply: 'Don't play that; you will kill me.' And I am sure he would not have played it, for he loves me, that boy. But pride witheld me. We talked about the part. He asked my advice. For two months it lay upon my table. We read it together. I showed him how I conceived it. Now and then he escaped me and, with eyes that I have no longer, he, who knows the public pretty well by this time, he discovered ideas that I had never seen. What I suffered in those sessions! No, one must pass through it to know it, don't you see? But all that was nothing to my martyrdom to-night. . . Oh! I ought not to have come here. But it was stronger than I. Curiosity, and perhaps also — I 'm ashamed to own it — the secret hope of receiving in the midst of the ap-

plause a regret, a memory for myself; to hear some one in the audience say: 'Ah! if old Bloncourt had acted that!' Well, no, not one word. They had enough to do to applaud. And yet, he doesn't act well, that boy. Sometimes he is even very bad. When he entered I thought they would hiss him. He doesn't know how to walk. He can't hold himself on the scene. In that great part, so studied, so composed, did he find a single deliberate effect, anything? No. He just threw himself into it headlong, with all the giddiness of youth. Passion stood him in place of talent. For instance, in that great scene with Kitty when Chatterton —"

And off went the poor soul detailing to me the faults of his son. He mimicked his intonations, his gestures. From the point of view of theatrical science all that he said was very just, very profound; and I was surprised to find how many false notes there were in a performance which had charmed me. All this while eager and prolonged applause came to us from within with a noise like hail, increased still more by the sonorous emptiness of the corridors and the silence of the place.

"Yes, yes, applaud," said the hapless comedian, turning livid at each salvo. "He is young. To be young, that's the whole of it. I, I am old. I am wrinkled. Ah! how stupid it all is! . ." Then, lowering his voice and speaking as if to himself: "What I feel is incomprehensible. Here's a scamp who takes my all, my name, my fame, who has not waited for my death to steal my shoes, and yet I can't help loving him. He is my son, after

all. It is I who have fed him, taught him, brought him up, and when I hear him applauded, I have, in spite of myself, a feeling of gratified pride. There are some things that are not so bad in what he does, that toad! . . No, the misfortune is that I ever taught him my profession. I ought to have applied his intellect elsewhere. Then I could at least have been proud of him at my ease, and I should n't have had the grief of seeing my thirty years of success wiped out by his first day's triumph."

At that moment the crowd began to leave the theatre. The play was over. The corridor, lately so cold and deserted, turned suddenly hot and luminous. An approving murmur, a sort of atmosphere of success circulated from group to group, and out into the silent streets to spread itself through Paris. The old comedian leaning against a pillar, his ear listening, gathered in the eulogies of the last spectators.

Suddenly he gave a bound. "Adieu!" he said to me very hastily, in a hoarse, changed voice which frightened me. I tried to detain him. "Bloncourt, Bloncourt! where are you going?"

He turned to me his convulsed face, his eyes all brilliant with tears. "Where am I going? Why, to kiss the boy, *parbleu!*"

IX.

LYON.

RECOLLECTIONS OF CHILDHOOD.

STRANGE city! Is it because I see it across a sad and wearisome childhood? Is it the high black wall of the Lyceum where I languished so long which gives to my recollections these gloomy tints? I do not know; but the mere writing of that name Lyon makes my heart ache. I remember a lowering sky the colour of soot, a perpetual fog rising from the two rivers. It does not rain, it mists, and in the depressing atmosphere of that dull climate the walls weep, the pavements ooze, the rails of stairways are damp to the touch. The aspect of the population, its movements, its language, are all affected by the humidity of the air. Complexions are wan, eyes sleepy, laziness of pronunciation shows itself in circumflex accents on lengthened syllables, and something, I know not what, that is limp and slack in voice and gesture—singular forms of speech, yet without colour, ways of speaking that are found nowhere else; names have local physiognomies: Bouvard, Chipié, Mouillard, are types that are very Lyonese. Even Polichinelle is not known as such; they have baptized him Gnafron.

Outside of these rather puerile impressions, which I give you for what they are worth, there is also an original and curious region to study, which at any rate is a come-outer from provincial uniformity and commonplaceness. I have never returned there since my school days, but with my recollections of those days and all that my childish eyes retained without then understanding it, I can perfectly represent to myself to-day the Lyon where I lived, that dual town, manufacturing and clerical, mingling its business of steeples and shuttles, its odours of incense and raw silk, workshops and sacristies, something of a corner of Rome and of Manchester combined.

I remember first the plateau of the Croix-Rousse, the great workman-suburb swarming with life, at the top of the broad stone steps. As you mounted the "Grand Côte," the pulsing of the Jacquart looms, the tick-tack of the shuttles seemed to come to you from each of the thousand narrow windows drawn up in lines on five and six storeys, inclosing that working life like the cells of a hive. Between the uprights of the looms and the interlacing meshes a whole population of weavers, men, women, and children, were moving behind the panes. Oh! those poor little *gamins*, how pale they were! When these people work, Lyon calls them her *canut* (local term for silk weavers), but in times of revolution, when the looms work no longer and the great stone steps are not broad enough to contain the flood of workmen rolling toward the town, Lyon, terrified, cries

out: "*Les voraces* [the devourers] are coming down!"

Between ourselves, I never myself saw them come down, those terrible devourers; but in the Terreaux, where we lived, every one was very much afraid of them. That was the quarter of the high commerce, of the opulent and gloomy Lyonese warerooms, of wealth in bales, the mute result of the toil above; and as the Terreaux are precisely at the foot of the Croix-Rousse, the merchants on days of alarm live with their eyes turned to that threatening acclivity, down which an avalanche seems ever ready to rush upon them.

As a counterpoise to the plateau of the Croix-Rousse, Lyon has the plateau of Fourvières, the religious mount, facing the industrial mount. Low down, at the foot of the slope, lies the metropolis of Saint-Jean, with the archbishop's palace and the seminaries; a continual sound of bells echoes through the silent streets and deserted squares, crossed at the hours of service by long lines of seminarists in surplices, with the junior clergy, their masters, who pass gravely, their arms crossed beneath their capuchins lined with ermine, the long skirts of their cassocks trailing on the pavement. This corner of Lyon has left upon my mind the impression of a Roman quarter. Behind it begin the steep alley-ways leading up to Fourvières between the walls of convents, the gardens of Communities, portals surmounted by crosses and emblems, and steeples ringing their chimes amid the verdure. Here are met pro-

cessions of the parishes, brotherhoods on pilgrimages unrolling as they wind along the streets like a blue or white ribbon, with floating veils, undulations of banners and capes, flashes from motionless crosses as the lights pass them. At other times solitary groups glide along the walls with a grave, absorbed air in process of accomplishing some vow. I remember a woman in deep mourning, walking up that steep slope paved with pointed stones, in her bare feet. An ascetic face, accustomed to tears, she led by the hand a little boy, also in black, breathless with his walk, and rather embarrassed by his mother's bare feet, at which he looked in stupefaction.

As you approach the church, which stands at the top of the hill, little shops with pious articles and religious imagery furnish the street with their show-cases, containing chaplets of coral and mother-of-pearl, olive-stones suspended on metal rods, hearts of crystal, crowns of jet, and *immortelles*. Also strange little newspapers, the *Rosier de Marie*, the *Echo du Purgatoire*, the portrait of Sister Rosalie with her decorations, and that of the Rector of Ars, highly coloured and surrounded by his numerous miracles. Behind these tarnished panes were also to be seen a crowd of little arms and legs in white wax, all sorts of votive offerings, fantastic, mysterious books, the abnormal lucubrations of diseased brains, dreams of Pascals without genius, illustrated by coarse pictures representing the horrors of hell, the damned in torture, calcined skeletons loaded with chains; and all in yellowed

pamphlet paper, the colour of wax, to which the dust on the panes soon gave the vulgar look of things at a fair.

But it was especially in the chapels of the church above that the votive offerings and the pictures and images should be seen! What a jumble of things comical or touching; unforgetable pictures hanging to columns, explained by grateful notices, or left entirely in the vagueness of miracle; pictures of blind, amputated, converted, shipwrecked people, M. de Ratisbonne illuminated by faith, on his knees, his arms crossed. Above, on the dome of the church, Notre-Dame de Fourvières, all in gold, looking down on Catholic Lyon with its convents, its congregations, communities, brotherhoods, and the innumerable religious societies without rule or costume, spread throughout the whole quarter, and giving to this section of the Lyonese world a certain clerical tone, habits of melancholy gentleness and lowered eyes.

The Devourers of the Croix-Rousse! the Congregations of Fourvières! These are the two dissimilar elements of which Lyon is composed; and if you are surprised that they have not been amalgamated during all the time that they have lived in each other's presence I shall tell you that the Saône and the Rhone — the two Lyonese rivers — are just as unlike as the two mountains, and that their waters keep for leagues, even when mingled, each its colour and its peculiar flow. The Saône is slow, heavy, silent, rather lingering, full of holes, eddies, and whirlpools. The Rhone is broader,

more rapid, strong in its flow, noisy and billowy as the sea. It is not, however, our noble Rhone of Avignon, which rolls great tracts of azure heavens and sunset skies with all their flames. Here the Lyonese sky tints the water, weights it with fog, and on sunlit days gives it the dull tones of a metal mirror. Between the two rivers Lyon is threatened with frequent inundations. Sometimes the Saône "pricks up" as they say down there, and sometimes the Rhone. Occasionally the two together. Then it is terrible. The inundation of 1856, which I saw myself, has remained ever present in my memory. The Rhone, during the night, had burst its dikes and was flowing backwards through a suburb of the town.

I shall never forget those timber houses giving way under the force of the water, the walls detached and carried off in sections, showing the interior of the homes on each storey, the wall-paper hanging in strips, the portraits swinging to the void, the furniture suspended, as it were, in air, and a little cage where a bird was singing before his seed, still fresh. There were other, and more distressing sights. Roofs, the last refuge, crowded with lives in fear, voices strangling with distress, arms stretched out in supplication. Here, the thunder of a falling house, the whirling smoke and dust floating above the engulfed storeys. Farther on, the barracks of the Part-Dieu half submerged, with their black windows open like eyes, put out as the water rose. The road to Villeurbane transformed into a river, floated above its

causeway rafts crowded with women, children, oxen, horses, mattresses, furniture; and everywhere on the roofs, on the crumbling walls, on the boats, on the trees, soldiers of the artillery, soldiers of the engineers, adding the vivid note of uniforms to this great lost battle against the waters.

X.

THE CABECILLA.

(*Spanish Guerilla Chieftain.*)

THE worthy Father had just finished saying mass when they brought him the prisoners. The place was a wild corner of the Arichulégui mountains. A fallen bowlder, through which a giant fig-tree had forced its twisted stem, formed a sort of altar, covered, in guise of cloth, with a Carlist banner fringed with silver. Two chipped water-coolers served as chalices, and when the sexton Miguel, who served the mass, rose to change the gospels you could hear the cartridges rattle in his box. All around, the soldiers of Don Carlos were ranged silently in rank, muskets slung across their shoulders, and one knee to earth on their white berettas. A fine sun, the Easter sun of Navarre, concentrated its sparkling warmth into this hollow among the rocks, burning and sonorous, where the flight of a gray swallow alone disturbed the psalmodies of the priest and his assistant. Above, on a dentelled peak, sentinels were standing erect, defined upon the sky in motionless outline.

Singular spectacle! this priest, leader of an army, officiating among his soldiers. And how plainly the double existence of the Cabecilla could

[illegible]

flock of sheep in a slaughter-house. Their uniforms full of straw, their accoutrements in disorder, the dust which covered them entirely from the tuft on their caps to the points of their yellow shoes, all contributed to give them that miserable appearance of defeated men, in which moral discouragement is betrayed by physical prostration.

The Cabecilla looked at them for a moment with a short laugh of triumph. He was not sorry to see the soldiers of the Republic humble, livid, ragged in the midst of his well-fed, well-equipped Carlists, Navarrese and Basque mountaineers, brown and dry as a carob-bean.

"Viva Dios! my sons," he said to them with a good-natured air, "the Republic feeds her defenders badly. You are all as thin as the wolves of the Pyrenees when the mountains are covered with snow and they come to the plains to snuff the smell of meat in the ray of light that gleams beneath the doors of the houses. Men in the service of the good cause are treated differently. Will you try it, *hermanos?* Fling off those infamous caps, and put on the white beretta. As true as that this is the holy Easter-day, I will spare the lives and feed like my own soldiers all of you who shout out, "*Vive le roi!*"

Before the good Father had finished, all the caps were in the air and cries of "Long live King Carlos! — long live the Cabecilla!" echoed on the mountain. Poor devils! They were so afraid of dying, and the good food they smelt about them, broiling in the shelter of the rocks before the rosy

bivouac fires was so tempting. I think the Pretender was never acclaimed with so much heart. "Give them something to eat at once," said the priest, laughing. "When the wolves cry that way they are sure to have long teeth."

The carabineers moved away. But one of them, the youngest, remained standing before the chief in a proud and resolute attitude, which contrasted with his youthful features and the fine down, scarcely coloured, that covered his cheeks with a blond powder. His soldier's coat, much too large for him, lay in folds upon his back and arms, showing at the cuffs two slender wrists, and, by its amplitude, making the lad seem slighter and younger still. There was fever in his long, brilliant eyes, the eyes of an Arab lighted up with a Spanish flame. That flame annoyed the Cabecilla.

"What do you want?" he asked.

"Nothing. I am waiting till you decide my fate."

"But your fate is that of the others. I named none. The pardon was for all."

"The others are traitors and cowards. I never shouted."

The Cabecilla quivered and looked him full in the face.

"What is your name?"

"Tonio Vidal."

"Where are you from?"

"Puycerda."

"How old?"

"Seventeen."

"Has the Republic no men that she is reduced to draft boys?"

"I was not drafted, *padre.* I volunteered."

"You know, rascal, that I have more than one way to make you shout, *Vive le roi!*"

The lad made a superb gesture. "I defy you to do so," he said.

"Then you would rather die?"

"A hundred times!"

"Very good — you shall die."

Then the priest made a sign, and the squad of executioners formed around the prisoner, who did not blench. Before such noble courage, the Cabecilla had a moment of pity. "Have you nothing to ask of me? Will you eat? Are you thirsty?"

"No," replied the lad, "but I am a good Catholic, and I would not wish to appear before God without confession."

The Cabecilla was still in his stole and surplice.

"Kneel down," he said, seating himself upon a rock, and, the soldiers having withdrawn, the condemned began in a low voice: "Bless me, my Father, for I have sinned. . ."

But in the middle of the confession a terrible volley of musketry was heard at the entrance of the pass.

"To arms!" cried the sentinels.

The Cabecilla bounded up, gave his orders, distributed the posts, scattered his soldiers. He himself sprang to a blunderbuss without taking time to pull off his surplice, when, looking round, he saw the lad still kneeling.

"What are you doing there?"

"I am waiting absolution."

"True," said the priest, "I had forgotten you."

Gravely he raised his hand and blessed that young bowed head; then, before departing, glancing around him for the squad of executioners dispersed by the attack, he made one step backward, took aim at his penitent, and blew his brains out.

XI.

KADOUR AND KATEL.

KADOUR-BEN-CHÉRIFA, sergeant-major of native sharp-shooters, was dying one evening when they brought him to the Rippert saw-mill on the Sauerbach; and for five long weeks, shaken by his wounds, trembling with fever, he lived as in a dream. Sometimes he thought himself on the battlefield, shouting and leaping through the flax and the hops of Wissemburg; or else, over there, in Algeria, in the house of his father, the cadi of the Matmatas. After which, he opened his eyes, and vaguely beheld a chamber with long white curtains, silent and still, green leaves fluttering at the windows, sunshine mingling with clouds and close beside his bed a little sister of mercy, attentive, silent, but wearing no silver cross, or chaplet, or blue veil, only two thick braids falling on her velvet bodice. From time to time some one called her: "Katel! Katel!" Then the maiden went away on the tips of her toes, and the wounded man could hear in the distance a young, sonorous voice which cooled him like the sound of the rivulet flowing under the windows of the saw-mill.

Kadour-ben-Chérifa was long ill; but the Ripperts had taken such care of him that his wounds

were closed, and they had hidden him so well that the Prussians were not able to send him to die in the casemates of Mainz. And now he was beginning to talk, and to show his white teeth, and to make a few steps in his chamber, one of his sleeves hanging down — the one with a large gaping hole in the middle of the gold lace — over a wounded arm, still bandaged and impotent.

Every day into the little garden of the saw-mill Katel would take down a straw chair for the wounded man; and she always placed it in the warmest corner, where the grapes ripened fast. Then Kadour, who, in his quality as son of a cadi had studied at the chief Arab school in Algiers, would thank her in French that was a little barbarous and enamelled with such words as *bon bezeff* and *macach bono*. Quite unsuspecting, the worthy Turk is under the charm. This ready gayety of the young Frank, free as a bird, without veil in the open air or lattice at her window, surprises and delights him. There is a long distance between that and the cooped-up life of the women of his country, the little Moorish creatures masked in white and perfumed with lemon verbena. Katel, on her side, thinks Kadour rather too dark, but he looks so good, so brave, and he hates the Prussians so heartily! . . One thing displeases her; it is that down there, in that Algeria of Africa, the men have the right to have several wives. Katel does not understand that, not she. So when the Algerian, to tease her, would say in his jargon: "Kadour marry soon. . . Take four wives . . .

Four." Katel was very angry: "Hoo! the wicked Kadour! . . Pagan!" The Turk would laugh like a boy; and then, all of a sudden, he would be mute and serious before the young girl, opening his eyes so wide, so wide, you would really think he meant to carry her away in them.

That is how the loves of Kadour and Katel began.

Kadour, when cured, went back to his father, and you can well imagine what fêtes were given in his honour in the land of the Matmatas. The reed flutes and the little Arab drums played their finest tunes to receive him. The old cadi, his father, seated before his door, on seeing afar in the cactus lane the coming of the cherished son whom he had thought dead, trembled under his woollen burnous as if he had the fever. For a whole month there was nothing in the community but an uninterrupted series of *diffas* and *fantasias*. The cadis, the agas of the neighbourhood quarrelled for the honour of having Kadour-ben-Chérifa as a guest, and every evening at the Moorish café they made him relate the great battles in which he had taken part.

But for all that, these honours, these fêtes did not make Kadour happy. In the paternal home, surrounded by the memories of childhood, his horses, his dogs, his arms, something was missing to him, — the frank laugh and the honest speech of Katel. The perpetual little warble of the Arab women, which in other days had made his heart

beat, now fatigued and bored him. No longer did he love the sequin head-dresses, or the wide pink satin trousers. Talk to him, rather, of the long braids hanging down, without pearls, gauze, or flowers, threaded only by a ray of the setting sun in a little garden in Alsace.

And yet, if Kadour chose, — in the community next to his there are beautiful black eyes watching for him behind the latticed windows of the aga's house; beautiful eyes so lengthened by kohl that their glance seems a long caress. But Kadour does not want such eyes any longer. What he dreams of, what he grieves for, is that good, kind glance from Katel which went so quickly round his room to see if anything were lacking to her patient, a glance in which life was always active, like light in the blue of a drop of water.

Little by little, however, the charm of those blue eyes wore away; that tender charm mingled with recovery, with the first going out of convalescence, with the climate of France, so soft, so tempered. Kadour ended by forgetting Katel. Through the valley of the Chelif there is talk of nothing but of his coming marriage with Yamina, daughter of the Aga of Djendel. One morning a long defile of mules was seen to mount the hill to the town. This was Kadour-ben-Chérifa going out with his father to buy the wedding presents. Their whole day was spent in roaming the bazars, choosing burnous striped with silver, Smyrna rugs, amber necklaces, earrings. And as he handled

the pretty jewels, the silken threads, the delicate stuffs, Kadour thinks only of Yamina. Orient has recovered him completely; but more through habit, influence of the atmosphere and things, than by ties of heart.

Towards evening, the line of mules, laden with bags of mat-weed swollen with treasures, was coming down the street of the faubourg, when, before the courtyard of the Arabian office they were stopped by a block in the roadway. A party of emigrants had just arrived. As nothing was ready for them, these unfortunate people had come to the office to complain, to insist upon their rights and obtain information. The most discouraged sat upon their baggage, wearied by their sea-voyage, annoyed by the curiosity of the crowd; and on all these exiles, as a trial the more, the sun was going down and darkness was coming to make an unknown land and the bewilderment of a new arrival still more gloomy. Kadour looked at them mechanically. But suddenly a great emotion rose up in his heart. The costumes of the old peasants, the velvet bodices of the women, that hair the colour of the ripened harvest — but here his vision took an actual form. He recognized the gentle features, the long braids, the smile of Katel. She is there before him, with old Rippert, the mother, and all the little ones, far away from their saw-mill and the Sauerbach, which flows, over there, by a deserted little house.

"Kadour!"

"Katel!"

As for him, he turns pale; and she, she has reddened slightly.

But come, all is arranged in a minute. The cadi's house is large; and while waiting to obtain their little plot of ground, the family must install itself in it. The mother gathers up the scattered parcels. She calls the little ones already playing with the native children. They are put among the bags pell-mell with the stuffs. Katel laughs with all her heart at seeing herself so grand on an Arab saddle. Kadour laughs too, but less, however, through an emotion of pent-up happiness. As darkness has fallen and the night is cold he wraps his friend in a beautiful striped burnous, one of the wedding presents, and a *haick* embroidered with pearls; and as she sits with this accoutrement draped and folded about her, motionless and straight on her high saddle, she looks like a fair young mussulman who has quitted her veil. Kadour thinks so as he looks at her. Wild ideas come into his head, a thousand projects. He will give back her troth to the aga's daughter — he will marry Katel — no one but Katel. Who knows? Perhaps some day they will come back thus from the town through the laurestinus, they two alone — he holding her bridle as at present.

Feverish and full of his dream, he gives the signal to start. But Katel stops him in her gentle voice. "Not yet. My husband is coming. Let us wait for him."

Katel is married. Poor Kadour!

XII.

THE THREE CROWS.

The interview of the three Emperors failed from the point of view of an alliance offensive and defensive.

French Journals of September, 1872.

IT is the evening of a day of battle. From the shock of two armies Nature is still quivering. The hot breath of cannon floats above the fields in heavy russet clouds. The air is full of eddies, like the sea after a storm. The trembling of the terrible commotions of the day is felt; and the earth, covered with snow, disturbed in her wintry repose, is gullied and ravined beneath the weight of wheels, the desperate trampling and the fall of horses and men.

Horrible labour! in those furrows of snow battle had sown corpses. The gray overcoats are twisted by death's contortions. Arms rise up from the crowded ditches; feet stretch stiff and straight pushing the earth before them.

His face uncovered, pale beneath the leaden sky, a young soldier lies there. His hands are black with powder, his tunic pierced with balls. He was fighting in the thick of the battle, under fire, and his comrades thought him dead when he fell. He lived, however. He called with all his

remaining strength, but nothing answered him save moans and rattles.

At last, benumbed by cold and suffering, worn-out as he was with the whistling of shells, the flashing of cannon, and all the evolutions of that bloody mêlée, he felt himself tempted, invaded, by the great tranquil peace of the earth on which he lay, and ready to yield himself to sleep or to death as it might be.

But now on the vast horizon which fills completely his half-closed eyes, three black spots appear to the northward, growing larger in the sky as they draw nearer. They are wings — dark wings that hasten.

Soon they stop above his head; three motionless crows hang suspended in the pallid sky with the poise, the tranquillity of beasts of prey whose eyes are watching. In the still confused and vibrating atmosphere of the battlefield, the almost imperceptible beat of those great pausing wings made one think of three battle-flags bearing each the image of a hovering black crow.

"Have they come for me?" thought the wounded man with terror, the whole of his poor body quivering as he saw the three crows descending from above and perching on a mound close beside him.

What fine birds they were i' faith! fat, lustrous, well-fed. Not a feather missing in their wings. And yet they live in the midst of battles. They even live by them alone. But always afar-off, very high up, beyond the range of balls; never descending till the regiments are on the ground, the

dead and wounded mingled in the same dreadful levelling.

Truly these three birds had quite the air of important crows. They saluted with their beaks, parading the one before the others and marking their steps on the bloody snow with their pointed claws. Then, when they had done the civil thing, they began to caw quite low, quite low; never taking their eyes from the wounded man.

"Cousins," said one of the jet-black birds, "I have called you here for that little French soldier that you see lying there before you. He was a bold little soldier, inspired with singular courage, but he had no prudence, no reflection. Look at his coat all riddled with holes, and think how many balls it took to stretch him on the ground. Cousins, 't is a fine prey, and if you like we will share him; but we must wait a little while before we go to him. Though his weapons are broken, such as he is, bareheaded, with helpless hands, he is still to be feared if he revives."

The one who spoke was the biggest of the three; and the two others, while they listened, kept out of reach of his claws and his hooked beak.

Presently he resumed: "Hurrah! now we 'll share him. I 'll eat his heart; it is a warm heart, valiant; it will give youth to mine."

Do you hear what they say, little soldier? Is it true that your heart no longer beats?

The second crow spoke out: "I 'll eat his eyes. French eyes are large, and clear, and shine with life."

Quick! open your eyes, little soldier, open your eyes if they still can see.

And the third crow says: "I 'll eat his tongue. In the Latin countries that 's the finest bit of all."

Come, speak! speak out! shout to them loudly that in spite of all the blood you have lost, there is some still left in your veins. . .

One would really think he was dead, and when, their conference ended, the three birds with savage eye and voracious beak, approach him, their wings drooping, his body does not even quiver.

Poor little soldier of France! They are about to devour you piecemeal; they are rabid to get you. They 'll take the very buttons off your tunic, for birds of prey delight to seize on all that glitters, even in blood.

Gently the three crows approach him. The boldest risks a peck at his finger. This time the little soldier wakes up, and quivers all over. "He is not dead! He is not dead!" say the cowardly birds, and they hop to their mound for safety.

Oh! no, the little French soldier is not dead. See how he raises his head, and how his indignation puts a little life into him. His eye brightens, his nostrils swell. He fancies the air is less heavy; he thinks he breathes better.

A ray of the winter sun, rose-tinted and pale, wanders across the ravaged earth; and as he admires that sad setting, which to him is a gleam of dawn, behold! beneath his outstretched hand, the snow, melting in its warmth, has given place to a tiny, green shoot of wheat in the blade.

O miracle of life! The wounded soldier felt himself reborn. Leaning with both hands on the soil of his country he strove to rise. The three crows watched him afar, ready to fly at a moment; and when they saw him on his feet, seeking around him, with a gesture that was still tremulous, for his fallen weapons, they rose together and flew away to the North already dark with night. In the sky is heard the terrible beat of their wings and the clack of their beaks. 'T is a hurried, tumultuous flight of fear and of anger both. One would think they were bandits who had missed their stroke and were fighting each other as they fled.

XIII.

SALVETTE AND BERNADOU.

I.

IT is Christmas Eve in a large town of Bavaria. Through streets white with snow, in the confusion of a fog, comes the noise of carriages and bells, and the tumult of a crowd which presses joyously round the cooked meats displayed in the open air, the booths, and the shop windows. Brushing with a light rustle the ribboned and flowery booths, branches of green holly and whole fir-trees covered with pendent articles are carried in the arms of pedestrians above the heads of all, like a fragment of the forests of Thuringia, — a memory of nature in the factitious life of winter. Daylight is fading. Over there, behind the gardens of the Residenz can still be seen a gleam of the setting sun, red through the fog, and in the town there is so much gayety, so many preparations for the festival, that each lighted window appears to be hanging to a Christmas tree.

The fact is that to-day is not an ordinary Christmas! We are in the year of grace one thousand eight hundred and seventy, and the birth of Christ is only a pretext to drink to the health of the illustrious Von der Tann, and to celebrate the triumph

of the Bavarian warriors. Christmas! Christmas! The Jews of the lower town themselves are merry. There is old Augustus Cahn running round the corner of the *Grappe Bleu.* Never did his little ferret eyes shine as they do to-night. Never did his bushy mane shake itself so gayly. On his sleeve, worn with the strings of his old clothes-bag, is now an honest little basket, full to the top, covered with an unbleached napkin, the neck of a bottle and a twig of holly sticking out.

What the devil does that old usurer intend to do with all that? Will he, too, celebrate Christmas? Has he invited his friends and family to drink to the German cause? Why, no! Everybody knows that old Cahn has no country. His *Vaterland* is his strong-box. And he has no family, and no friends either; nothing but debtors. His sons, or rather, his partners, went to the wars three months ago with the army. They plied their traffic behind the waggons of the landwehr; selling brandy, buying clocks, and on battle nights turning out the pockets of the dead and emptying the wallets dropped in the ditches. Too old to follow his sons, Père Cahn remained behind in Bavaria, and there he did a magnificent business with the French prisoners. Always roaming round the cantonments he purchased watches, aiguillettes, medals, and postal orders. He could be seen gliding through the hospitals and round the ambulances and about the beds of the wounded, asking in a low voice in his hideous jargon: "Haf you someding to zell?"

And lo! at this very moment, when you see him

scurrying so fast with his bag on his arm, it is because the hospital closes at five o'clock, and two Frenchmen are awaiting him up there in that big black house with the narrow, grated windows, where Christmas has only the pallid gleam of a rushlight beside the pillows of the dying with which to illumine its Eve.

II.

THESE two Frenchmen were named Salvette and Bernadou. They were two *chasseurs à pied*, two Provençals from the same village, enrolled in the same battalion, and wounded by the same shell. But Salvette had the greater vigour; already he was getting better and could make a few steps from his bed to the window. Bernadou, on the other hand, had not the will to recover. Beneath the dreary curtains of his hospital bed his face seemed thinner and more languishing day by day. When he spoke of his country and their return to it, it was always with that sad smile of a sick man, in which there is more of resignation than of hope. To-day, however, he is a little brighter, thinking of that beautiful Christmas festival which in our land of Provence is like a bonfire lighted in midwinter, and remembering the midnight masses, the church all decorated and luminous, the village streets dark and crowded with people, and then the long evening around the table, the three traditional torches, the *aïoli*, the snails, and the pretty ceremony

of the "Christmas log," which the grandfather carries round the house and sprinkles with boiled wine.

"Ah! my poor Salvette, what a sad Christmas it will be this year! If only we had the money to buy a little white loaf and a flask of good *clairet* wine! 'T would have done me good to sprinkle the log with you once more before I pass the musket to the left arm."

As he spoke of the white loaf and his native wine, the eyes of the sick man shone. But what could be done? They have nothing left, neither watch nor money. Salvette, it is true, still keeps in the lining of his tunic a postal order for forty francs. But that is for the day when they get their liberty, and make their first halt on the soil of France. That money is sacred. It cannot be touched — and yet, poor Bernadou is so low! Who knows whether he will ever be able to return? And here 's a fine Christmas they could celebrate together — would n't it be best to profit by it?

So, without saying a word to his compatriot, Salvette rips up the lining of his tunic to get out the postal order, and when old Cahn came as usual in the morning to make his tour of the wards, after a long debate and discussion in a low voice, he slips into the old Jew's hand that square of paper, stiff and yellow, smelling of powder, and stained with blood. From that moment Salvette assumed an air of mystery. He rubbed his hands and laughed to himself as he looked at Bernadou. And now that the daylight is fading, he is there, on the watch,

his face against the panes, until he sees, through the fog of the deserted square, old Augustus Cahn, hurrying along, out of breath, a little basket on his arm.

III.

THAT solemn midnight, chiming from the steeples of the town, falls lugubriously upon the wakeful night of the poor patients. The hospital ward is silent, lighted only by the night-lamps hanging from the ceiling. Great flitting shadows float across the beds and the bare walls with a constant swaying motion, seeming, as it were, the oppressed breathing of all the poor souls lying there. Now and then there were dreams told aloud, or nightmares groaning, while from the street rose up a murmur of steps and voices, blending in the cold, sonorous night as in the porch of the cathedral. A composed eagerness made itself felt, the mystery of a religious festival in the hours of sleep, putting into the darkened town the gleam of lanterns and the fiery glow of the church windows.

"Are you asleep, Bernadou?"

Very gently, on the little table by the bed of his friend, Salvette has placed a bottle of Lunel wine, a round loaf, a pretty Christmas loaf, in which a branch of holly stands up straight. The wounded soldier opens his eyes hollow with fever. In the flickering light of the lamps and the white reflections from the roofs where the moon lies dazzling

on the snow, this impromptu Christmas seems to him fantastic. "Come, wake up, comrade! It sha'n't be said that two Provençals let the *réveillon* pass without a drop of their own good wine." And Salvette lifted his friend with a mother's care. He filled the goblets and cut the loaf; then they touched glasses and talked of Provence. Little by little, Bernadou grew brighter with tender emotion — the wine, the memories! With that return of childhood which sick men find in their very weakness, he asked Salvette to sing him a Provençal carol. The comrade desired no better. "Well, which shall it be? That of *The Host?* or *The Three Kings?* or *Saint-Joseph told me?*"

"No! I would rather have *The Shepherds.* That 's the one we sang at home."

So be it, *The Shepherds!* In a low voice, his head between the curtains, Salvette began the song. At the last verse, in which the shepherds place in the manger their offering of fresh eggs and cheese, and, addressing them with an affable air, —

Joseph leur dit: Allons! soyez bien sages,
Tournez-vous-en et faites bon voyage.
Bergers,
Prenez votre congé.

behold, poor Bernadou, slipping back, falls heavily on the pillow. His comrade, thinking him asleep, calls him, shakes him. But the wounded man lies motionless, and the little branch of holly before him on the sheet seems the palm-branch that at home they place upon the pillow of the dead.

They are so spiteful and buzzing, those flies of the South; besides, that slope to mount! and the rector who weighed so heavy, especially after dinner!

From time to time peasants, passing along the path, stepped aside to give room to the Good God with that twirl of the cap peculiar to the peasants of Lorraine; the eye sarcastic and the bow respectful, a glance that seems to mock the gesture.

To each the rector returned a bow on behalf of the Good God very politely, but without exactly knowing what he did, for his head was getting heavy with sleep.

The weather was warm, the road white. Below the slope, behind the poplars, the wavelets of the Loire glittered like dazzling silver scales. All that scattered light, the humming of the bees after the pollen of the flowers along the roadside, the song of the thrushes in the vineyards, the happy song of greedy and surfeited little creatures, all this contributed to set the rector, hazy with his breakfast of *rillettes* and good white wine, a-dozing.

But soon after passing Villandry, where the rock becomes higher and the path narrower, the rector of Chemillé was roughly awakened from his slumber by the "Dia! hue!" of a cartman directly in front of him, with a huge load of hay that swayed heavily from side to side at each turn of the wheels.

The moment was critical. Even by squeezing as close as he possibly could to the rock there was no room for both on the road. Go down to the highway? The rector would not do it, having

taken this path as a short cut, hearing that the sick man was at the last extremity. He tried to explain this to the cartman; but the boor would not listen to him.

"I am sorry," he said, not taking his pipe from his mouth, "but the day is too hot for *me* to go back towards Azay by the other road. Easy for you, if you go quietly along on your donkey."

"But don't you see what I have here? It is the Good God, you bad Christian, the Good God of Chemillé that I am taking to a dying man."

"I am from Villandry," sneered the cartman. "The Good God of Chemillé is none of my business. . . Dia! hue!" and the pagan whipped up his beast to drive him on, at the risk of sending donkey and all that was on its back rolling down the slope to the meadow.

Our priest was not more patient than he should be. "Ha! that's how it is. Well, wait!" And jumping from his donkey, he laid, very delicately, the Good God of Chemillé by the roadside, on a bank of wild thyme, amid golden gorse and the white lichen — a true altar-cloth, flowered and fragrant, such as cannot be found in even the cathedral of Saint-Martin of Tours.

Then the holy man knelt down, and made the following short prayer: "Good God of Chemillé, thou seest what has happened to me; and that this miscreant is forcing me to teach him a lesson. To do so, I don't need any help, for my fists are solid and I have right on my side. Therefore, remain tranquilly where thou art, watching the

XV.

WOODSTOWN.

A FANTASTIC TALE.

THE site was superb on which to build a city. Nothing was needed but to clear the banks of the river and cut down part of the forest, that immense virgin forest, rooted there since the beginning of the world. Then, sheltered on all sides by those wooded hills, the city would slope down to quays of a splendid port at the mouth of the Red River, four miles only from the sea.

As soon as the government at Washington had granted the concession, woodsmen and carpenters set to work; but you never saw such a forest! Fastened in the sod by all its roots, all its fibres, no sooner was it cut down at one end than it grew up at the other, younger and more vigorous from its wounds, — each blow of the axe bringing out new shoots. The streets, the squares of the town, scarcely laid out, were invaded by vegetation. The walls sprang up less rapidly than the trees, and no sooner were they up than they began to sink down under the action of the ever living roots beneath them.

To conquer this resistance, which blunted the steel of axes and hatchets, they were forced to

have recourse to fire. Day and night a stifling smoke filled the cleared places in the thickets, while the great trees around flamed up like torches. The forest strove to struggle still; retarding the conflagration with its floods of sap and its close-pressed, airless foliage. Winter came on. The snow settled down like a second death upon the great tracts of land black with charred tree-trunks and calcined roots. Henceforth they could build in peace.

Soon a vast city, all in wood like Chicago, spread itself along the banks of the Red River, with broad, straight, numbered streets, with squares, an Exchange, markets, churches, schools, and a whole maritime concourse of sheds, docks, custom-houses, warehouses, yards for the building of ships. This timber town — Woodstown they called it — was quickly populated by the class that occupies a new city. Feverish activity circulated through every quarter; but on the surrounding hills, overlooking the crowded streets and the port crowded thickly with vessels, a mass of sombre and threatening aspect spread itself around in a half-circle. This was the forest, gazing.

It gazed at that insolent town which had taken its place on the banks of the river and robbed it for three miles square of its noble trees. All Woodstown was made of its life, its very life. The tall masts swaying in the port, those innumerable roofs bending one to the other, even to the last hut of the farthest suburb, It, the forest, had furnished all, even the implements of labour, even

the furniture in the dwellings, its services valued only by the length of its branches. Ah! what terrible rancour was in that forest's heart against the city of pillagers!

As long as the winter lasted no one was aware of what was really going on. The people of Woodstown heard, now and then, a dull cracking sound in their roofs or their furniture. From time to time a wall gave way, the counter of a shop cracked in two noisily. But new wood is subject to such accidents and no one attached importance to them. Nevertheless, at the beginning of spring — a sudden, violent spring, so rich in sap that it sounded beneath the earth like the rushing of waters — the soil began to move, raised by invisible but active forces. In every house, the furniture, the partitions of the walls swelled, and risings could be seen along the planks like those left by the passage of moles through earth. Neither doors nor windows would shut or open. "It is the dampness," said the inhabitants. "With warm weather that will pass."

Suddenly, on the morrow of a great storm that came from the sea, bringing summer in its heated lightning and its warm rain, the town on awaking gave a cry of stupefaction. The red roofs of the public buildings, the steeples of the churches, the floors of the rooms, even to the woodwork of the beds, all were bedewed with a green tinge, thin as mildew, light as lace. Looked at closely, this was seen to be a quantity of microscopic buds, in which unfolded leaves were visible. This singular effect

amused the inhabitants and did not alarm them; but by evening tufts of verdure had bloomed out everywhere, on the furniture, on the walls. Branches grew visibly; when lightly held back by the hand they were felt to be growing and struggling upward as if with wings.

The next day, all the apartments looked like greenhouses. Creeping plants were running up the stairways. In the narrow streets branches met from one roof to another, putting above the noisy city the shade of a forest avenue. Matters now became disquieting. While learned men assembled to deliberate on this case of abnormal vegetation, the crowd hurried about to see the strange aspects of the miracle. The cries of surprise, the astonished clamour of the whole people gave solemnity to this singular event. Suddenly, some one cried out, "Look at the forest!" and they saw with terror that within two days the verdant half-circle had drawn closer to them. The forest seemed to be descending to the town. An advanced guard of briers and creeping things had already reached to the first houses of the suburbs.

Then Woodstown began to comprehend, and to be frightened. Evidently the forest was coming to reconquer its place on the banks of the river; and its trees, cut down, transformed, built up, were freeing themselves of their bonds to go and meet her. How resist the invasion? With fire they risked destroying the whole town. And what could axes do against that flow of sap renewed ceaselessly, those monstrous roots that

filled the earth below them, those million flying seeds which germinated as they broke, growing instantly to trees where'er they fell?

Nevertheless, every one set bravely to work with scythes, harrows, axes; and they made a vast slaughter of foliage. In vain. From hour to hour the confusion of virgin forests, where from the tangle of bind-weeds and creeping things rose up gigantic growths, invaded the streets of Woodstown. Insects and reptiles swarmed; nests were everywhere, with a great flapping of wings and masses of chirping beaks. In a single night all the granaries of the town were emptied by these countless coveys. Then, like a satire in the midst of this great disaster, butterflies of all sizes, all colours, hovered among the flowery clusters, and provident bees, seeking a safe asylum in the hollows of the trees so hastily grown, built up their honeycombs within them as a proof of duration.

Vaguely, through the noisy surging of the branches, could be heard the sound of axe and hatchet; but on the fourth day all such work was seen to be impossible. The grasses grew too high and too thick. The creeping things clung to the arms of the woodsmen and garroted their motions. Besides, the houses became uninhabitable; the furniture, covered with foliage, lost all form. The ceilings gave way, pierced by the lance of the yuccas and the long sharp thorns of the mahogany. In place of roofs rose a vast dome of catalpas. That was final. The people fled.

Across the network of plants and branches, growing closer and thicker at every instant, the terrified inhabitants of Woodstown rushed toward the river, carrying with them what they could of their wealth and precious things. But what toil to gain the water's edge! No longer were there any quays. Nothing but gigantic reeds. The ship-yards, where the wood had been stored, were forests of pine; and in the harbour the vessels built at Woodstown looked like islands of verdure. Happily, a few foreign ships were there, on which the crowd took refuge and whence they could see the old forest come down victoriously and join the new one.

Little by little the tree-tops met, and beneath the blue and sunlit sky the enormous mass of foliage spread in one sheet from the banks of the river to the far horizon. No trace of the town, its roofs, its walls, remained. From time to time a hollow sound of falling masses, last echo of the ruin, or the axe of some desperate woodsman came from the depths of the leafage. Then nothing more — save the vibrant, rustling, humming silence, clouds of white butterflies swirling above the deserted river, and afar down there, at its mouth by the sea, a ship fleeing away, with three green trees rising aloft amid its sails, and bearing in its bosom the last emigrants from what had once been Woodstown.

XVI.

EPILOGUE.

THE table is hospitable, well served, well surrounded. The light of two large lamps pours down, dazzling and white upon the lustrous cloth; and the faces, illumined to the level of the eyes, issue from the shadows in a circle, smiling, peaceful and beaming. It is the close of a dinner of friends, the hour for warmth of heart, effusions; and as these worthy fellows have known each other long, the tranquillity, the security of habit is felt in the atmosphere of their talk. Words cross each other without jostling, ideas make concessions politely, drawing aside to allow themselves to be passed. Looks are exchanged as warmly as a grasp of the hands. Rays are emitted by the touching of glasses; and the good-humour of the guests is frank as the colour of the wines of France in the crystal of the decanters.

All of a sudden the scene changes. The room seems larger, also darker. Elbows which touch fraternally are drawing apart, and this makes spaces through which a cold air of darkness and night is felt to pass, as if a window had opened suddenly. What is the matter? What has happened? Politics have entered. Let them work,

and in five minutes that friendly table, so peaceful, will be shrill and discordant. Voices will grow bitter in discussion, the wine will turn sour in the bottles. No more heartiness, no more confidences.

The guests eat angrily. Some are talking to themselves, as if in a foreign language, without listening to those about them. Others, on the contrary, suffocating with indignation, become purple, and choke with unuttered speech. Wounding remarks, glances laden with hatred, are flung, crossing each other like balls. Dates for revolution, names of streets to be cleared with musketry are shouted out; nights of December and days of June are revived, heaped with dead in the emotions of renewed memory. The oldest friends look at each other stupefied, perceiving that between them lie a battlefield and barricades that have crumbled down these twenty years; and as they dive into this history, this nest of rancour, the drunkenness of anger rises till at last they stutter, foam, and grasp the handles of their knives as they look at one another.

This is political hydrophobia; a terrible disease, with which all France is attacked at this moment.

O politics, I hate you!

I hate you because you are coarse, unjust, malignant, screeching, garrulous;

Because you are the enemy of art, of work;

Because you serve as a label to all follies, all ambitions, all laziness.

Blind and passionate, you part fine hearts that

were made to be united, and you bind, on the contrary, beings most dissimilar.

You are the great dissolvent of consciences; you teach the habit of lying, you teach subterfuges, and thanks to you honest men become the friends of scoundrels, provided they belong to the same party.

I hate you above all, O politics, because you have succeeded in killing in our hearts the sentiment, the idea of country;

Because I have seen democrats rubbing their hands with joy on hearing of the disasters of Frobach and of Reichsoffen, and I have seen imperialists not even trying to conceal their delight at each new defeat of Chanzy or Trochu.

I hate you, for it is you who won for us that terrible saying of Henri Heine: —

In France there is no longer a nation; there is nothing now but parties.

PARIS, 1873.

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